

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[Spartanburg, South Carolina]

HEARING # 19-11761

MARCH 12, 2019

6:00 P.M.

DOCKET NO. 2018-319-E:

Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC - Application for Adjustments in Electric Rate Schedules and Tariffs, and Request for an Accounting Order

TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY
AND PROCEEDINGS

VOLUME 1 OF 8

HEARING BEFORE: Comer H. 'Randy' RANDALL, *Chairman*; Justin T. WILLIAMS, *Vice Chairman*; and COMMISSIONERS John E. 'Butch' HOWARD, Florence P. BELSER, Thomas J. 'Tom' ERVIN, Swain E. WHITFIELD, and O'Neal HAMILTON

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NANETTE EDWARDS, ESQUIRE, and **JENNY R. PITTMAN, ESQUIRE**, representing the SOUTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF REGULATORY STAFF

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Good evening, everyone.
Welcome to this public night hearing of the Public
Service Commission.

First of all, I want to thank everybody for
coming. We've got – we've got a good crowd here,
and we're – we're anxious to hear what you've got
to say.

The Sheriff's Office has – has told us that,
because of the Fire Marshal regulations, that the –
everybody that's – you either have to be in a seat
in here or out in the – the lobby. You can't be in
the doors or in the back of the room. You will be
able to hear everything that goes on, and, if
you've signed up to speak, you will be able to – to
come in and be able to talk when it's your turn.
But we need to comply with the Sheriff's Office
before we get started. So we're going to have to
ask everybody that's not in a seat, that's standing
up, to stand out in the – in the – the lobby. You
will be able to hear, I'm told.

VOICE: Are we –

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

VOICE: – going to be able to hear outside?

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Yes, you will be able to

1 hear outside. They said that the speaker is on,
2 out there.

3 VOICE: They said we're going to hear.

4 [Brief pause during which audience
5 members comply with previous instruction]

6 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Okay. Thank you, everyone,
7 for being here tonight. Before we get going and
8 turn it over to Mr. Stark to read some instructions
9 on this, I wanted to introduce the Commission to
10 you that's here tonight. All the members of the
11 Public Service Commission are here.

12 Commissioner Butch Howard from District 1 and,
13 to my far left, Commissioner O'Neal Hamilton from
14 District 7, Commissioner Florence Belser from
15 District 2. Starting at the other end,
16 Commissioner Justin Williams from District 6,
17 Commissioner Tom Ervin from District 4,
18 Commissioner Swain Whitfield from District 3.
19 And my name is Randy Randall; I represent District
20 – Swain is from District 5. And I represent
21 District 3.

22 Okay. So we're going to turn it over to Mr.
23 David Stark, who's going to go over a few things
24 for us and take appearances from the parties.

25 VOICE: Hey, can you turn the speakers up? We

1 can't hear out here.

2 VOICE: Can't hear back here, either.

3 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Okay. We're going to have
4 to – we'll ask the folks that are in charge here to
5 please do that, and everybody – if everybody
6 outside will – you're going to have to sort of be a
7 little quieter. But they've asked to have the
8 speakers turned up a little more out in the hall,
9 so...

10 [Whistle]

11 VOICE: He says that nobody else can go
12 inside, so we've got to be quiet so we can hear
13 what's going on in there.

14 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

15 Okay, Mr. Stark.

16 MR. STARK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 Good evening, and welcome. My name is David
18 Stark. I'm an attorney with the Commission, and
19 I'll be serving as counsel to the Commissioners
20 this evening.

21 This proceeding before the Public Service
22 Commission, in Docket No. 2018-319-E, concerns the
23 Application of Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC, for
24 adjustments in electric rates, schedules, and
25 tariffs, and a request for an accounting order.

1 Before I continue, I would ask that you mute
2 or cut off your cell phones, if you would please.
3 That would be very helpful.

4 At this time, we would like to take
5 appearances of the attorneys and receive any
6 opening remarks from the parties' representatives.

7 MR. ELLERBE: Mr. Chairman and members of the
8 Commission, Frank Ellerbe here for Duke Energy
9 Carolinas.

10 There is a team of Duke folks here. I'm going
11 to only introduce two of them: Kodwo Ghartey-Tagoe
12 is the South Carolina State President for Duke
13 Energy; and Marcus Preston is the South Carolina
14 Director of Regulatory Affairs. And, Mr. Chairman,
15 Mr. Preston will be available if – if people have
16 specific questions – that sometimes happens at
17 night hearings – he will – we'd ask that people go
18 back and speak to him if there's some specific
19 issue; he would then direct them to another member
20 of the team who might be able to help them with
21 whatever their inquiry is.

22 Thank you, very much.

23 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

24 MS. PITTMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 My name is Jenny Pittman. I'm an attorney

1 with the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff.
2 I want to thank you all for being here this
3 evening. We really appreciate the turnout. We
4 look forward to hearing what you all have to say.

5 The agency that I work for, the Office of
6 Regulatory Staff, is a State agency, but it is
7 completely separate from the Public Service
8 Commission. The Office of Regulatory Staff is
9 charged with representing the public interest and
10 making recommendations to the Commission regarding
11 this Application that Duke Energy Carolinas has
12 filed for a rate increase.

13 This hearing today is for you all, the
14 consumers, to have an opportunity to share your
15 thoughts and feelings about this rate increase, and
16 it is important for the Commission, in order to
17 make a final decision, to hear what you all have to
18 say.

19 If you have any questions, while you cannot
20 ask them of the Commission, I do have several
21 people with me here this evening: Our Executive
22 Director, Nanette Edwards, will be available after
23 the hearing to speak with you and answer any
24 questions that you may have. I also have Mr.
25 Anthony Sandonato with our Utility Rates and

1 Services Division here to help you. Outside, you
2 may have noticed an ORS setup; there's a banner and
3 a table out there, and Brad Kirby, with our
4 Consumer Services Division, is out there. If you
5 need to leave early, you can speak with him instead
6 of waiting until the end of the hearing when the
7 rest of us will be available. He also has
8 brochures with our numbers, in case you need to
9 reach any of us.

10 I think that's everything [indicating]. I
11 thank you all for your attention and your
12 participation.

13 Mr. Chairman, I would just ask that the sign-
14 in sheets from this evening be marked and put into
15 the records as a hearing exhibit.

16 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: The sign-in sheets will be
17 marked as Hearing Exhibit No. 1. Thank you.

18 MR. STARK: In a moment, I will call the names
19 of those who have signed up to speak to come
20 forward. After your name is called, you are sworn
21 or affirmed in, please begin by giving your name
22 and address. Spelling would be helpful for the
23 court reporter. Then you can proceed with your
24 testimony. Please be sure to speak into the
25 microphone so that everyone can hear you. Once

1 you're done, please remain at the podium for any
2 clarifying questions that the parties or the
3 Commissioners may have.

4 We have placed a time limit of three minutes
5 on all presentations. As you can see, we have a
6 timer that will aid in timing your testimony.

7 If you have not signed up to testify tonight
8 and you decide somewhere in the middle of the
9 hearing that you would like to be heard after all,
10 please proceed to the back doors and sign in with
11 the Commission staff member located there, and they
12 will notify me that you wish to testify. The
13 Commission will not hear from you unless you have
14 signed up to speak.

15 I would remind everyone, this is a public
16 hearing and it's your time to testify with regard
17 to Duke's proposed rate increase. But, due to the
18 judicial nature of this proceeding, the General
19 Assembly says that the Commissioners cannot take
20 questions and they are also prevented from making
21 comments. ORS and the company will be available
22 after the hearing for any questions you might have.

23 For your information, there will be another
24 night hearing at 6 p.m. in Anderson tomorrow –
25 that's March 13th – and a third night hearing at

1 6 p.m. in Greenville on Thursday, March 14th. The
2 merits hearing, during which various technical
3 witnesses will testify, will be held on Thursday,
4 March 21st, at 10 a.m., in the office of the
5 Commission in Columbia.

6 Please keep in mind that you can only testify
7 once. If you testify tonight, you can't testify at
8 another night hearing or at the merits hearing.

9 I'd like to turn it over to the Chairman for
10 additional information.

11 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

12 Thank you. We're very glad to have everybody
13 here tonight, and we just want to remind you of a
14 couple of things. It will help move this along –
15 we do have a clock, and we've asked you to have
16 your thoughts ready so that when the buzzer goes
17 off at three minutes, then, if you would – would
18 stop, and then we're going to ask questions if
19 anyone from the parties or from the Commission has
20 questions. So that will help us.

21 Also, it will help – I know people get fired
22 up about a lot of things, so, but if you – if you
23 contain cheering and applause, it – that cuts into
24 people's time, and we want to make sure that we
25 hear everything that everybody wants to say. So we

1 want to try to move this along as best we can.

2 We're going to ask Mr. Stark to start, and we
3 will call the first witness and we will begin.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. STARK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 With that being said, I will call the names of
7 the witnesses who've signed up to speak. I will
8 call a witness up to the stand and I will also call
9 the next person in line so that they can get
10 prepared to deliver their testimony.

11 With that, we have our first witness, Margaret
12 Swinger – Swindler. Would you please come forward
13 to the stand? And Kevin Dayton, you're on deck.
14 You're on deck.

15 [Witness affirmed]

16 THEREUPON came,

17 M A R G A R E T J . S W I N D L E R ,
18 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

19 WITNESS: My name is Margaret Swindler. I
20 live at 407 Caulder Avenue, Spartanburg, South
21 Carolina 29306.

22 My concern with this increase for Duke Power
23 is: Have you considered the senior citizens?
24 They're already having a hard time getting their
25 medicine and living expenses. And an increase will

1 add to those expenses as well. That is my concern
2 for this Commission.

3 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Swindler.
4 Hang on one second.

5 Any questions from the parties?

6 [No response]

7 Commissioners?

8 [No response]

9 Thank you, ma'am, I appreciate you being here.

10 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused.]

11 MR. STARK: Kevin Dayton, please come forward.
12 And James Duville, Jr., you are on deck.

13 [Witness affirmed]

14 THEREUPON came,

15 K E V I N D A Y T O N ,
16 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

17 WITNESS: It's Kevin Dayton. I'm at 416
18 Majestic View Court in Inman, North – South
19 Carolina.

20 I'm fairly new to the State, been here since
21 2017, and I know that Duke Energy has had a number
22 of issues with the – with different storms that
23 have happened in this time period, and, as well as
24 other things that have happened. But I – I think
25 this rate increase is extreme, and I don't think

1 that it should be happening. I think we should
2 just keep it the same as it is. That's it.

3 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Dayton.

4 Parties questions?

5 MR. ELLERBE: No, sir.

6 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioners?

7 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman, I have
8 a question for the gentleman.

9 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Mr. Dayton. Mr. Dayton,
10 could you –

11 WITNESS: I'm sorry.

12 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Hang on. We've still got a
13 question from one of the Commissioners.

14 WITNESS: I thought I was dismissed.

15 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: That's all right. Sorry.

16 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: I'm sorry. You don't
17 mind if I ask you a question?

18 WITNESS: No, sir. Go ahead.

19 EXAMINATION

20 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:

21 Q What other things are you referring to?

22 A I've read about the – well, the storm that came through
23 last year, for Florence, as well as there were a number
24 of storms in North Carolina, as well, that they're
25 trying to cover the rates for. At least that's what it

1 seems like to me. I believe that, since they're still
2 making a profit, they do have ways of covering that. I
3 think that it's just an extreme measure to increase it
4 up by the amount they're asking for.

5 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: Thank you.

6 WITNESS: Anything else?

7 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Dayton.

8 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused.]

9 MR. STARK: James Duville is up and David Van
10 Narm or Van Marm, you are on deck.

11 [Witness affirmed]

12 THEREUPON came,

13 J A M E S E . D U V I L L E , J R ,
14 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

15 WITNESS: My name is James Duville. I live at
16 13610 Asheville Highway, in Inman, South Carolina
17 29349.

18 I actually have two Duke Power bills, one from
19 my residence and one from my home workshop. I
20 hardly ever use my home workshop, and I still get
21 charged \$43 a month. Okay?

22 I don't think this increase is going to help
23 me, when I'm on a fixed income. I am disabled,
24 can't work. Okay?

25 And what really gets me is what I've been told

1 is a hidden fee. This fee, I don't know what it
2 is. It doesn't show up on my bill. But there –
3 what people are telling me, that's going to raise
4 my bill. Okay? If you're going to raise the bill,
5 put the hidden fee on the bill so we know what
6 we're paying and why – and why we're paying a
7 hidden fee. Okay? If you're going to rate hike
8 the kilowatt-hour let us know that. Okay? But
9 this hidden fee is – what is it? Okay? Why is it?
10 All right? Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you Mr. Duville.

12 Parties, questions?

13 MR. ELLERBE: No questions.

14 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioners, any
15 questions?

16 [No response]

17 Thank you, sir.

18 COMMISSIONER BELSER: Mr. Chairman?

19 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Oh, I'm sorry.

20 EXAMINATION

21 BY COMMISSIONER BELSER:

22 Q Mr. Duville, where did you hear about this hidden fee?

23 A On the Internet and also through – and I can't remember
24 the man's name. I talked to him on the phone. He was
25 through one of the consumer groups. I can't remember

1 what it was. But he sent me information on this, where
2 I could go on the Internet, look at these charges that
3 were being added, and that's where I saw it.

4 Q Okay.

5 A And where I heard from it.

6 COMMISSIONER BELSER: Thank you, sir.

7 Appreciate it.

8 COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD: Mr. Chairman.

9 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioner Whitfield.

10 COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD: Thank you, Mr.
11 Chairman.

12 EXAMINATION

13 BY COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD:

14 Q Mr. Duville –

15 A Excuse me.

16 Q – I have a question for you. You mentioned you had
17 another bill for a home workshop?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Is that – and then I heard you say you're disabled. Is
20 that bill listed in a – as a business or commercial –

21 A No.

22 Q – hookup, or is it at a separate meter or two
23 residential meters?

24 A Separate. Separate meter. It was – when I first
25 applied for it, it was for a detached garage workshop.

1 That's what was on the application.

2 Q So you're -- what you're telling me is your -- both are
3 listed as a residential customer?

4 A Whatever they consider my workshop. I -- I couldn't tell
5 you. It's not on the bill what it is.

6 Q I see.

7 A But when it was applied for, it was a detached garage
8 workshop.

9 COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD: Yes, sir. Thank you.

10 That's all I have, Mr. Chairman.

11 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Anybody else?

12 [No response]

13 Thank you, Mr. Duville. Appreciate it.

14 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Mr. Duville, I have --

15 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Hang on one second.

16 EXAMINATION

17 BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

18 Q I have a quick suggestion for you. You might want to
19 check with the Duke representative in the back, standing
20 against the wall. It sounds to me like you might be
21 able to eliminate one of those meters and save the fee --
22 the hookup fee, if your detached garage is close by?

23 A It -- it's -- it is close by. But when I went to an
24 electrician, he was going to run the power off the
25 existing house meter box. He said that's not legal, so

1 he told me to call Duke. Duke sent their representative
2 out –

3 Q So you've already checked that.

4 A – and did all the stuff.

5 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Okay. Thank you, sir.

6 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Okay. Anybody else?

7 [No response]

8 Okay, Mr. Duville. Thank you.

9 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused.]

10 MR. STARK: Would David Van Narm –

11 MR. VAN MARM: I'm going to pass.

12 MR. STARK: Okay. Thank you, sir.

13 Jerry Whiteside, would you come forward,
14 please? And Harley Hutchins, you are on deck

15 [Witness affirmed]

16 THEREUPON came,

17 J E R R Y W H I T E S I D E ,

18 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

19 WITNESS: My name is Jerry Whiteside. I live
20 at Post Office Box 2128, Gramling, South Carolina.
21 And I hate to say this, but I never said this about
22 anything in my entire life, but, you know, I'm a
23 73-year-old man. I have never heard one person say
24 a positive comment about Duke Power. Everybody
25 hates them. And if there's another company come in

1 and tell them that they could have their service,
2 they would not have a single customer –

3 VOICE: Correct.

4 WITNESS: – unless it's a friend or family.
5 And it's a monopoly. It's the – it's the – you've
6 heard the story of Robin Hood? Well, he robbed
7 from the rich and gave to the poor. Duke Power, I
8 – I think they ought to change – I also would
9 propose, too, change the name back to Duke Power,
10 because that's what they want, to control. And you
11 should change your name back to the Duke Service
12 Commission, instead of Public, because you're not
13 serving the public, because they get – they always
14 get a raise every time that you – they'll ask you.
15 You have never turned them down.

16 [Applause]

17 [Testimony inaudible due to applause.] And they've been
18 challenged in court. Usually the judge rules.
19 They spend \$80 million every year to get with their
20 little lobbyists and friends and all these other
21 slush funds. And it's a sin. I mean, it's a
22 preposterous thing for somebody to do this, and you
23 make this kind of profit, and you get these that
24 think they should go in and spend \$63 million in
25 little slush funds and all their other things for

1 all their adversaries or whoever they're trying to
2 bribe. But, I mean, this is just not common sense.
3 This is not common sense to do stuff like this.
4 You treat people like you want them to treat you,
5 and if they were doing this to you, you'd be
6 raising Cain, too.

7 And I feel for these poor people that are out
8 here, worked at Inman Mills and made a little bit
9 of money. It's all they can do to pay their bills
10 and their medication. This is going to rob them.

11 I don't have a lot of lights. I don't show my
12 house. I have lamps on. I leave a light for my
13 cat at night, if I'm going to be gone. But other
14 than that, I'm one of the lowest consumers in my
15 area. Everybody else uses 2.7 kilowatts; I use
16 1.7. You're going to raise my rate astronomically.
17 I'm going to be the one to pay it. It's not right.
18 It's not fair. Like I say, I don't – I'd never ask
19 anybody to do that. It's a crying shame.

20 VOICE: Yes, sir.

21 [Applause]

22 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Hang on, Mr.
23 Whiteside.

24 Commissioners?

25 <

EXAMINATION

BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

Q Mr. Whiteside, appreciate you being here tonight and sharing your feelings with us. But did you know that three of the Commissioners before you tonight have never sat on a Duke Energy case?

A Okay.

Q We're brand new to the Commission.

A Okay.

Q And so it's not fair to –

A I apologize to you, but that's just the way I feel.

Q It's not fair to say we've always done it, because this is the first – first cases that we've had from Duke Energy. And so I can assure you – and I can tell you the other members that are – that are here, we're going to be fair and impartial and looking at this very closely and carefully.

A Well, that's the whole question.

Q And did you know that that's the thing we're sworn to do under the law? Did you know that?

A But could this Commission answer one question: Did you ever turn them down for a raise?

Q I – I can't –

A I'm asking the rest of them: Has anyone ever turned them down for a raise?

1 VOICE: No.

2 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Sir, we're not going to –
3 we can't answer questions right now.

4 WITNESS: Oh, you can't answer. Oh. I guess
5 you can't.

6 [Laughter]

7 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: No, that's – that's
8 according to the law. Okay. Thank you.

9 [Applause]

10 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused.]

11 MR. STARK: Would Harley Hutchins – Harley
12 Hutchins – please come up? And Bill Shoolbred –

13 MR. SHOOLBRED: Bingo.

14 MR. STARK: Did I get that right? – you're on
15 deck.

16 MR. SHOOLBRED: You got it right. You're one
17 of the first.

18 [Witness affirmed]

19 THEREUPON came,

20 H A R L E Y H U T C H I N S ,

21 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

22 WITNESS: My name is Harley Hutchins. I live
23 at 319 Lacey Leaf Court, Spartanburg, South
24 Carolina 29307.

25 What I've got is just a – a little thing that

1 come out of the *Herald-Journal*, September – I mean,
2 it's – it's July the 31st of '18. Power bill rates
3 for North Carolina households. Duke asked for a
4 raise in North Carolina for 8 percent. When it all
5 was said and done, the average bill went up 84
6 cents – this is by the *Herald-Journal* – at around
7 \$104. South Carolina already pays more rate than
8 North Carolina does. And I hope y'all are aware of
9 that.

10 And then the commercial customers got reduced
11 by 1.6 percent to nearly 4 percent. The
12 residential did have an increase of 1.2 percent
13 over four years. And you wonder: Why would they
14 do that? I mean, they've told us they saved
15 millions of dollars by putting all these meters in
16 and cutting out the meter-readers. That's been
17 done, but yet it didn't seem to help.

18 But why would you think they've cut that out?
19 I think it's because of this. March the 12th,
20 2018. The *Herald-Journal*: "Duke Energy CEO pay
21 jumps to \$21 million." It almost doubled in two
22 years' time. It was \$21.4 million 2017. So we
23 don't know if they're paying any more raises now or
24 before that. It went up from \$10.8 million, for
25 Chief Executive Lynn Good.

1 So that's what – you know, if you're – if
2 you're paying your chief people that much, what do
3 you need the little puny money from us people out
4 here, that you got to drip and take it out of.
5 It's just not – you know, it's not right. They
6 waste enough money on their stuff to compensate for
7 all of this.

8 VOICE: Amen.

9 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Hutchins.

10 [Applause]

11 Questions from the parties?

12 [No response]

13 Commissioners?

14 [No response]

15 Thank you, Mr. Hutchins.

16 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused.]

17 MR. STARK: Mr. Bill Shoolbred, if you would
18 come forward? Antonio Chisley, you are on deck.

19 [Witness affirmed]

20 THEREUPON came,

21 W I L L I A M S H O O L B R E D ,
22 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

23 WITNESS: My name is William Shoolbred. Bill
24 Shoolbred is – Bill is my nickname. I live at 142
25 Wrenwood Lane in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

1 A year ago I was an applicant for – to the
2 Public Service Commission, for Commissioner Ervin's
3 Fourth District seat. And congratulations,
4 Commissioner Williams. And I did not see
5 Commissioner Belser's name on the list of
6 applicants last year, so I'm not sure how
7 Commissioner Belser is the Second District
8 Commissioner, but I'm sure that's an appointment
9 through the Senate or the Governor or something
10 like that.

11 Anyway, in South Carolina, we pay higher rates
12 than anybody else in the country for electricity.
13 It's – it's just really absurd that some of the
14 poorest people in the country pay the highest rates
15 in the country for electricity. There's – I can't
16 find any reason for it anywhere.

17 This Commission is charged with protecting
18 customers from investor-owned utilities from
19 imprudent financial obligations or costs. That's
20 one of your charges. And you are charged with
21 balancing the needs of the electric contractors and
22 the other public utilities of South Carolina with
23 the needs or – or with protecting consumers from
24 these companies. And I have to say that the – that
25 I agree with the gentleman a couple of – a couple

1 of people before me: The Public Service Commission
2 has never turned down a request. They may have
3 reduced a request from Duke Power, but they have
4 never turned down a request from Duke Power.

5 There are – you know, you’re charged with a
6 lot of stuff, and your jobs are difficult in
7 balancing gas, television, and everything else, and
8 I know you have a difficult job to do. But I can
9 tell you this: If I were the Fourth District
10 Commissioner, I would not approve this Duke Power
11 increase in any way, shape, or form. Thank you.

12 [Applause]

13 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Questions?

14 [No response]

15 Commissioners?

16 [No response]

17 Thank you, Mr. Shoolbred.

18 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused.]

19 MR. STARK: Antonio Chisley, if you would come
20 forward? And Christina Johanningmeier or
21 Johanningmeier, you’re on deck.

22 MS. JOHANNINGMIER: I’ll – I’ll pass.

23 MR. STARK: Okay. Yes, ma’am. Thank you.

24 Michael Brady, you are on deck.

25 [Witness affirmed]

1 THEREUPON came,

2 A N T O N I O C H I S L E Y ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: my name is Antonio Chisley. I live
5 at 1 Overview Terrace in Spartanburg, South
6 Carolina 29307.

7 The people before me have said enough. We –
8 although we do want to see the future, we do want
9 better infrastructure and what have you – we can't
10 afford it right now, not at the rate of triple.
11 Right now, we need to take it a little bit slower,
12 my friends. We need to take the time, reduce it,
13 and show us something more than what you're giving
14 us.

15 Many times we go through our power outages for
16 days. All right? We have people here who haven't
17 received raises in God knows when. We need to take
18 it slower. If we don't do it now, you're going to
19 milk us dry. And if you milk us dry, what do you
20 do then? You move on to the next and leave a
21 barren wasteland.

22 I ask you to find it in your heart to take a
23 step back. Maybe you need to do a little trickle-
24 down economics like so many people believe in. We
25 have not experienced that ourselves, but we need

1 to.

2 What I'm saying to you all is that the older
3 folks who are living check-to-check, barely making
4 it, the younger people who work three and four jobs
5 just to barely make it, we want to eat; we want to
6 live; we want to be successful just like everyone
7 else. But we don't need to build this on the backs
8 that are going to break us.

9 I ask you guys to step up and realize that
10 we're here living our lives just like you're trying
11 to live your lives, but we want a piece of the pie,
12 as well. Thank you.

13 [Applause]

14 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Chisley.
15 Parties?

16 [No response]

17 Commissioners?

18 [No response]

19 Thank you.

20 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused.]

21 MR. STARK: Thank you. Michael Brady, would
22 you come forward? And, Robin Conner, you are on
23 deck.

24 [Witness affirmed]

25 <

1 THEREUPON came,

2 M I C H A E L B R A D Y ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: My name's Michael Brady. I live at
5 506 Rainbow Lake Road in Boiling Springs.

6 I have three meters that I take care of: One
7 is my mother's, one is my personal, and one is my
8 very small business. Right now I'm paying more
9 than I've ever paid for a mortgage in my life. My
10 average bills are about \$1100 a month for those
11 three meters. And now we're talking about a \$336 a
12 year increase just to be able to turn your light
13 switch on? Most people in this room probably can't
14 afford that. Some people might be able to. You
15 know, my – as I said, I take care of my mother.
16 I'm on Social Security at this point and have a
17 small business, and it is just impossible to think
18 that we will have these kinds of bills in front of
19 us.

20 It was in 2017, I believe it was, that I
21 started fighting the smart-meter installments. I
22 took about a year, and we disagree totally with
23 smart meters because they put out electromagnetic
24 frequencies and microwaves. Well, anybody with any
25 common sense understands that microwaves basically

1 cook things from the inside out, and that's what's
2 happening to our – our children. I know a number
3 of people – a lot of prominent people in South
4 Carolina that have had issues, health issues, come
5 with these new meters.

6 So I opted out. I put an opt-out meter in my
7 mother's home, my home, and my business, and I paid
8 \$150 for each meter to do that. And then on top of
9 that, I pay an additional \$11 a month for each
10 meter to have them come out and read the meter.
11 And now I understand that the smart meters are even
12 more dangerous – I mean, the opt-out meters are
13 more dangerous than the smart meters.

14 So I'm asking this Commission to take a step
15 back, not to pass this, not to agree with this.
16 And, as a matter of fact, I would ask you to take a
17 look at decreasing our bills as they are now.
18 Thank you.

19 [Applause]

20 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Parties?

21 [No response]

22 Commissioners, questions?

23 [No response]

24 Thank you, sir.

25 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused.]

1 MR. STARK: Robin Conner, if you would come
2 forward please? And Alysha McKenzie, you're on
3 deck.

4 [Witness affirmed]

5 THEREUPON came,

6 R O B I N C O N N E R ,
7 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

8 WITNESS: My name is Robin Conner. I live at
9 4729 Worden Drive in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

10 And I have a real issue with this. I take
11 care of my mother. She's 74 years old. I work
12 full-time. She's home all the time. We have power
13 outages. I can't do nothing to get to her. She
14 has to sit there, and sometimes it's days when our
15 power is out.

16 I went and I tried to be more efficient
17 because, when we moved into this home, we found out
18 it wasn't a very efficient home. I didn't like
19 that power bill, so I went and I got solar panels
20 to reduce my power bill. Now you're telling me,
21 because of that, you're going to increase my rates.
22 It's not right.

23 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Conner.

24 Any questions from the parties or
25 Commissioners?

1 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: I have a question.

2 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioner Williams.

3 EXAMINATION

4 BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:

5 Q You are the second or third person that has mentioned
6 power outages.

7 A Yes.

8 Q Could you tell me a little bit more about the service
9 and reliability issues?

10 A Well, we had the tornado come through; we were without
11 power for over two days. We called in repeatedly. We
12 were told, "Oh, it'd be a couple of hours." Then we do
13 messages: "Oh, it's going to be about 12 hours." "Oh,
14 it's going to be 24 hours." And it took over two days
15 when the tornado came through the neighborhood.

16 When we have ice storms, they put us down, and it's
17 the same thing. It's not reliable. We went out and we
18 bought a generator just so that we could at least have a
19 light and charge our phones so we could get updates,
20 make calls in case something happened with my mother.

21 Q So you have a generator and solar panels –

22 A Yes.

23 Q – at your home?

24 A Yes. And now I'm being told – I spend this money to
25 improve the efficiency of my home and to make it more

1 reliable, but now I'm going to have to pay the cost of a
2 price increase? I can't understand how that math works.
3 You know, I'm doing everything I can, and I'm paying for
4 my solar panels every month, \$30,000, to cut my bill in
5 half. And now you're going to increase it, so now
6 everything they said about those solar panels – "Oh,
7 it's going to cut your bill in half and you're going to
8 save all this money and you can use that to pay for your
9 solar panels." – it's not going to do me a bit of good.

10 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD: Mr. Chairman.

13 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioner Whitfield.

14 EXAMINATION

15 BY COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD:

16 Q Ms. Conner, I want to follow up with you with a couple
17 of questions. You partially answered one of them about
18 the solar panels, and it sounds like – you mentioned a
19 price of \$30,000, so what you're telling me is you
20 bought the solar panels; you're not leasing them?

21 A Correct.

22 Q And – and –

23 A Because I planned on being in this home long-term, and I
24 wanted to do the right thing to make my home more
25 efficient and to be able to feed power back to Duke

1 Power when I wasn't using it, to help other people out.

2 And, yeah, I had them paid for – they're being – they

3 were installed shortly after we moved into the home.

4 And it did; it cut my power bill probably in half for

5 the winter months. I went from about \$350 down to about

6 \$150 a month.

7 Q Well, that –

8 A But then the balance of that goes and pays for my solar

9 panels.

10 Q Well, you just answered my next question. I was – a lot

11 of times we like to know, from a ratepayer, exactly what

12 they're paying. So you shared with me you went from

13 \$350 a month to –

14 A – down to about \$150.

15 Q And if you don't mind me asking: How much do you pay

16 for your solar panels? What's your payment on that?

17 A My payment – I pay right now \$265 a month.

18 Q For the solar panels?

19 A Yes, sir. On top of my electric bill.

20 Q Prior to the solar panels, you had been averaging around

21 \$350?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And could you share with me, if you know off the top of

24 your head, how long that average was? Was that –

25 A Oh, it wasn't very long. After about three months of

1 that, of moving into the house and having that in
2 January, February, and March, I figured summertime was
3 going to be even worse, because we had a wood – we have
4 a wood-burning stove and our power bills were still that
5 high. So I figured summer was going to be worse with
6 the cooling, so I did everything I could and got the
7 solar panels installed as quickly as possible.

8 Q So you only had about three – three months or so at the
9 \$350, is what you're –

10 A Yes. Yeah.

11 COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD: All right. Thank
12 you.

13 That's all have, Mr. Chairman, of this
14 witness.

15 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Any other
16 Commissioners? Commissioner Howard?

17 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Ms. Conner, I would
18 suggest you go talk to a representative of Duke or
19 ORS. I mean, something doesn't seem right with
20 your bills, and I would check with the company
21 while you're here and see if you can get some
22 definitive answers and see if they've got any
23 suggestions for you while they're here.

24 WITNESS: Okay.

25 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Please do that. Thank

1 you.

2 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, ma'am.

3 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused.]

4 MR. STARK: Alysha McKenzie, if you'd come
5 forward please? And, Kathleen Wright, you are on
6 deck.

7 [Witness affirmed]

8 THEREUPON came,

9 A L Y S H A M c K E N Z I E ,
10 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

11 WITNESS: My name is Alysha McKenzie. I live
12 at 473 Webber Road, in Spartanburg, South Carolina
13 29307.

14 Like the lady before me, my husband and I also
15 put solar panels on our house. We finally have
16 them paid off; it was a \$30,000 bill. And Duke
17 Energy encouraged us to do this and then fought us
18 the entire way through the process. We were
19 actually the first people, we were told, in South
20 Carolina to install solar panels on our house – by
21 Duke Energy and the installers, we were told that.
22 And it did cut our bill drastically.

23 But every time we try to get Duke Energy out
24 to the house to do something, because before the
25 solar panels, every time our AC kicked on at the

1 same time as our pool pump, our power would kick
2 off. Everything would kick off. So my husband did
3 some work, because Energy won't respond, and we
4 installed solar panels, and we can now have AC and
5 our pool pump running at the same time.

6 And then I hear about the rate increase of
7 which it is going to affect mainly those that
8 conserve energy by turning off every light in their
9 house anytime they're not there, by making sure to
10 turn their AC in the summer up to 75, 78 degrees so
11 that it's not running, that leaves it so that
12 they're not using it in the summer and are burning
13 wood – all summer we go and cut down trees so we
14 don't have to use Duke Energy. And then they're
15 going to increase our rates because we decided,
16 "Hey, we're going to find other ways to survive."
17 And it's not doing any good. All they want is more
18 money. Thank you.

19 VOICE: Always.

20 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. McKenzie.

21 Parties, any questions?

22 [No response]

23 Commissioners?

24 [No response]

25 Thank you, ma'am.

1 [Applause]

2 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused.]

3 MR. STARK: Thank you. Kathleen Wright, if
4 you would come forward? And Sydney Bruner, you are
5 on deck.

6 [Witness affirmed]

7 THEREUPON came,

8 K A T H L E E N W R I G H T ,

9 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

10 WITNESS: My name is Kathleen Wright. I live
11 at 512 Shoreline Boulevard, Boiling Springs, South
12 Carolina 29316.

13 I don't agree with the rate increase either,
14 but on a positive note, as a property manager, your
15 customer service at Duke Energy, they're excellent,
16 streamlined online to do – I have multiple
17 properties that I put electricity on, so that part
18 is a positive.

19 The negative is, of course, the basic
20 facilities charge, I think the gentleman was
21 referring to as a secret charge, and the rate
22 increase, so that's twofold that I'm against. And
23 I – a lot of my tenants, as one gentleman said,
24 that he's working – that he works two and three
25 jobs just to survive. And, you know, sometimes

1 their electric bill is almost as much as their
2 rent, and sometimes they can't pay the rent because
3 they have to pay the bill. And I struggle as a
4 property manager making the decision: Am I going
5 to evict them because they can't pay the rent and
6 their – you know, with the high electric bills.

7 I understand that there's cost-of-living fees
8 and everything. My husband's cost-of-living fee
9 this year was 2 percent, and that's like not even
10 worth the paperwork. But it helps a little bit.
11 So a 12 percent increase is pretty high, and then
12 the basic facility charge is also pretty high,
13 which I think is astronomical for this State, which
14 is – the income is not as good as North Carolina,
15 some of the other surrounding – Georgia, and we're
16 paying higher rates.

17 And that's it. Thank you.

18 [Applause]

19 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, ma'am,
20 Ms. Wright.

21 Parties, any questions?

22 [No response]

23 Commissioners?

24 [No response]

25 Thank you, very much.

1 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

2 MR. STARK: Sydney Bruner, please come forward.

3 And, Kristy Schnel, or Schenel, please, you're on
4 deck.

5 [Witness affirmed]

6 THEREUPON came,

7 S Y D N E Y B R U N E R ,

8 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

9 WITNESS: My name is Sydney Bruner. I live at
10 1101 Roper Mountain Road, in Greenville, South
11 Carolina.

12 I'm here today because I actually work for
13 Spartanburg County, so pretty convenient, as far as
14 location goes. I moved here from Colorado in June.
15 In my years in Colorado, I survived many record-
16 breaking storms – snow, hail, ice, everything you
17 can name – and I lost power zero times. I was out
18 of power for zero minutes in my decade living in
19 Colorado. So you can believe that when I moved
20 here I was amazed at how poorly Duke treats its
21 people and how poorly Duke treats its customers.

22 I work for the Addressing Department here in
23 Spartanburg County, and I have people at least once
24 a week calling me in tears because Duke has denied
25 their application to turn on their power for just

1 simply saying that the address does not exist.

2 Their customer service is poor. Their maintenance
3 is poor. In my – you know, I've lived here since
4 June; I've been out of power [word inaudible] days.

5 COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry. Eight?

6 WITNESS: Eight days I have been out of power
7 – completely out of power. That is incredible.

8 You know, I don't know if y'all need to just
9 call up Colorado and see what they're doing right?

10 [Applause]

11 Because I can tell you right now they're doing
12 something that Duke is failing to do. They can –
13 they can afford to pay all these people millions of
14 dollars, they can afford these fines for
15 cybersecurity violations and clean water violations
16 and all sorts of violations. When is their
17 management going to be held accountable? Why are
18 we the only ones being held accountable?

19 [Applause]

20 There's a lot of reasons not to move to South
21 Carolina. There are many. Power should not be one
22 of them. It should be a basic right. That's all.

23 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Bruner.

24 Parties, any questions?

25 <

CROSS EXAMINATION

BY MS. PITTMAN:

Q Ms. Bruner, have you reached out – with these outages, have you called the Office of Regulatory Staff?

A No. I only called Duke.

Q Okay. Well, I would just like to point out Brad Kirby is outside; he'd be happy to talk to you and answer any questions you might have.

A Okay.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Hang on.

Commissioner Belser.

EXAMINATION

BY MS. BELSER:

Q Good evening, Ms. Bruner. Could you tell me about the power outages when you were out for eight days? Was it one outage, or was it more than one outage? And, you know –

A It was more than one outage. The biggest outage I had was with the snowstorm that came, and I was out for 3½ days.

Q All right.

A Besides that, it's usually half a day to a full day.

Q And do you know any – have you been given any reasons for those outages?

A I think two times it was because someone hit a car –

1 like they drove their car into a power pole, or there
2 was, like, an accident where they hit some sort of pole.
3 Besides that, I have been given no reason and no
4 expected time of power to be back on.

5 COMMISSIONER BELSER: Okay. Thank you, very
6 much.

7 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.
8 Anybody else?

9 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: I have a question.

10 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commission Ervin.

11 EXAMINATION

12 BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

13 Q What department did you say you work in at Spartanburg
14 County?

15 A At the Addressing/GIS Department.

16 Q Okay. And so you have people calling you that they
17 can't get their power cut on because they have no street
18 address? Is that – is that what you said?

19 A Yeah. But we – the address exists. And many times, the
20 address has existed for five to ten years, but Duke has
21 denied their application to turn on their power. So
22 then I take my time and the county's money to fight with
23 Duke.

24 Q What – and so you call Duke?

25 A Yeah. I call Duke.

1 Q What are their – what do they say when you call?

2 A Usually, it's – you know, I wait on hold for about a
3 half-hour. Typically, we fax them, and if that doesn't
4 work, I'll call and follow up. But they just say that
5 the address doesn't exist. And then I say, "The address
6 does exist. We've assigned the address," and it's just
7 a back-and-forth that shouldn't ever have to happen.
8 You know, I'll give parcel numbers and I'll give
9 subdivision names and I'll give customer names. I can
10 even give past customer names, and it's just –

11 Q Do you keep a log book of who makes these calls – who
12 they are and when they come in, that type thing?

13 A No. Because we deal with the public every day as far as
14 addressing goes and it's kind of who answers the door,
15 who answers the phone. And, unfortunately, fighting
16 with Duke has become more and more in our job
17 description.

18 Q Could you – would you be willing to keep a list and make
19 it –

20 A Yeah.

21 Q – available to the Office of Regulatory Staff so that
22 they can investigate it? Because that doesn't seem
23 fair, to me. If they have an assigned address from the
24 county, they should be allowed hookup.

25 A Yeah.

1 Q And so the best way to prevent that is to keep a list of
2 the callers, their addresses, their phone numbers, and
3 turn it over to the Office of Regulatory Staff – and
4 she'll give you her contact information. And they'll
5 investigate it, but you need a list. Do you have – we
6 have to have something in order to – for them to look
7 into it, we need documentation.

8 A Okay.

9 Q So I appreciate it – your willingness to help out.

10 A Yeah. Our office can definitely do that.

11 Q Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

13 Any other Commissioners?

14 [No response]

15 Thank you, Ms. Bruner.

16 [Applause]

17 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

18 MR. STARK: Kristy Schenel or Schnel and –
19 come forward, please? And it looks like Heather
20 Soto, you are on deck.

21 [Witness affirmed]

22 THEREUPON came,

23 K R I S T Y S C H E N K E L ,

24 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

25 WITNESS: I'm Kristy Schenkel. I'm at 172

1 Dellwood Drive, in Spartanburg. And I will add, as
2 my in-laws are elderly, and they regularly lose
3 power as well, it's an ongoing thing with them.
4 They were unable to be here this evening because
5 they are both elderly, and my mother-in-law has
6 health issues; she can't drive at night, and my
7 father-in-law cannot drive at night, either. So
8 they gave me permission to testify on their behalf,
9 if that helps.

10 My concern – I have a couple of them. One, I
11 am looking at my Duke Power here – I'm sorry – my
12 Duke Power bill, and there's already a fee here for
13 a fixed monthly Leaf 50C charge. That fee was
14 added probably one to two years ago, and to this
15 day I'm not sure exactly why it is there. I feel
16 like Duke Power – I'm being fee'd and taxed
17 basically to – to death. And there is no – because
18 Duke Power is the only player in town, basically,
19 they say, "Here's what we're going to charge you,"
20 and I have very little recourse.

21 I am also concerned because I know there was a
22 nuclear power plant down further – down in the
23 Lowcountry that failed, and I believe that the
24 SCE&G customers are now going to have to pay for
25 that. There's a nuclear power plant, I believe,

1 that's in Gaffney or is being proposed for Gaffney,
2 and my concern is that, if that fails, I will be on
3 the hook for that, as well. I'm not sure why I, as
4 a – basically an electric – I have to pay this,
5 whether I want to or not, and the recourse that's
6 available to me is limited.

7 And I haven't seen – and I could be – it may
8 be that I'm not well-informed enough. I'm not sure
9 why this rate increase is necessary. As been – as
10 has been mentioned before, the CEO is making lots
11 of money. Duke Power is making lots of money. And
12 I am not sure why I have to – have to supplement
13 that.

14 [Applause]

15 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, ma'am. Thank
16 you, Ms. Schenkel. Hang on, Ms. Schenkel.

17 WITNESS: Oh, I'm sorry.

18 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Hang on.

19 WITNESS: Yes, sir.

20 MR. ELLERBE: There may be – there are people
21 from the company and from ORS who can go over your
22 bill with you and help you figure out what those
23 charges are.

24 WITNESS: Okay.

25 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Yes, ma'am. Hang on.

1 MS. PITTMAN: Real quick, Ms. Schenkel.

2 WITNESS: Either way, it's a charge that's
3 been added, and I don't have any say as to whether
4 or not I can negotiate it. It's a fee that was
5 added.

6 Yes, ma'am. I'm sorry.

7 MS. PITTMAN: No, no problem.

8 CROSS EXAMINATION

9 BY MS. PITTMAN:

10 Q Ms. Schenkel, I was going to ask: Your in-laws, you
11 said they regularly lose power. Is there – this is
12 storm related? This is just all the time? Could you
13 explain that just a little bit?

14 A It's storm related, and it's also due to where they are.
15 They are on a – they are on a street that has a power
16 line nearby, and somebody regularly runs into the – into
17 the power pole. And we will call them, and they will
18 say our electricity is out. Or they will call us and
19 say, "Hey, is your electricity out?" And when we say
20 no, they say, "Oh, somebody must've hit the power pole
21 again."

22 Q Okay. Well, thank you, and I was also going to just
23 echo Mr. Ellerbe that we have – we have staff here and
24 outside if you want to talk to anybody.

25 A Okay. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Any other Commissioner
2 questions?

3 [No response]

4 Thank you, ma'am. Appreciate it.

5 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

6 MR. STARK: Ms. Soto, would you come forward
7 please? And Kaycee Reeves, you are on deck.

8 [Witness affirmed]

9 THEREUPON came,

10 H E A T H E R S O T O ,
11 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

12 WITNESS: I am Heather Soto, and I live at 889
13 Wo Ezell Boulevard, 29301.

14 And, first of all, I just want to say thank
15 you for letting the people who are directly
16 affected be a part of this conversation.

17 Also, I want to start off by saying the Duke
18 Energy CEO – some of the sentiments I'm going to
19 say will have been – I'm echoing them; some have
20 already been said. But Duke's CEO made \$21.4
21 million last year, an increase of 55 percent from
22 the year before and her highest ever as chief
23 executive.

24 These hikes will directly affect and hurt our
25 elderly, our disabled, our veterans, and our low-

1 income residents the most. According to the –
2 according to the policy analysis group, EQ
3 Research, this proposed fee hike will be the
4 highest in the nation among publicly traded power
5 companies. Another study by move.org found that
6 South Carolinians pay an average of \$473 a month on
7 utilities, ranking it – ranking the State at
8 number seven of the most expensive utilities in the
9 United States, and for the most electricity, the
10 most expensive bill. Not only is the rate high,
11 it's extremely high in relation to the salaries for
12 the State.

13 I myself graduated from USC with my undergrad
14 and my graduate. I work three jobs, and I can
15 barely afford to heat my home. We use space
16 heaters so we don't have to heat the entire thing.
17 And I just want to say that all of you are tasked
18 to be the voice for this community, and the
19 community has spoken. And please do not raise our
20 rates.

21 [Applause]

22 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

23 Any questions from the parties.

24 [No response]

25 Commissioners, any questions?

1 [No response]

2 Thank you, Ms. Soto.

3 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

4 MR. STARK: Kaycee Reeves, please come
5 forward? And Cynthia Knight, you're on deck.

6 [Witness affirmed]

7 THEREUPON came,

8 K A Y C E E R E E V E S ,

9 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

10 MS. SOTO: Yeah, she asked me to stand with
11 her, so I'm not just creeping.

12 WITNESS: Awesome. All right. So thank you
13 for giving us all the opportunity to raise our
14 concerns and for letting me speak. My name is
15 Kaycee Reeves. I am at 414 Pleasant Green Drive in
16 Inman, South Carolina 29349.

17 So I do want to take a minute and just discuss
18 South Carolina, and then we'll go into business in
19 general, then, of course, Duke's proposed increase.

20 The great State of South Carolina is
21 beautiful, but I am going to compare it to the USA
22 in general. Average household income for
23 individuals was \$60,336 in 2018 in the US. In
24 South Carolina, that was \$50,570. And that's just
25 for an individual. Average for a family in the US

1 as a total was \$73,891, and in South Carolina,
2 that's \$62,432. And that's according to the
3 departmentofnumbers.com/income/South-Carolina/.

4 So we have in this great State close to
5 5 million people and close to a million of those
6 live at or below poverty, according to
7 talkpoverty.org. So – and that was for the year
8 2018. Women and children are the highest that are
9 affected. So we have so many already that are just
10 trying to live, for basic necessities. We're just
11 trying to survive. One million out of five million
12 here. You're charged with trying to protect us.
13 So I need you to do that and tell Duke no.

14 VOICE: No.

15 [Applause]

16 WITNESS: So I want to talk business. We're
17 all about business. We're in business to make
18 money. That's what it's about. So, as a business,
19 according to businessjournals.com, \$23.6 billion in
20 revenue, and that was as of 2017. There was a Q4
21 earnings call on February 14th where Lynn Good
22 advised, and I quote, "This growth reflects the
23 strength of our regulated utility franchises, a
24 robust capital plan, and recovery mechanisms that
25 will deliver reliable and affordable energy to our

1 customers and returns to our shareholders,” end
2 quote. There was a 4 percent growth.

3 So with that, I really need to discuss that we
4 have the ninth highest poverty rate in the US right
5 here in South Carolina. To triple the fee on South
6 Carolina families without us being able to choose a
7 different company to do business with, I feel, is
8 highly unethical, especially for a company that has
9 a revenue of \$23.6 billion, 4 percent growth for
10 shareholders, and a CEO with a salary of \$21.4
11 million last year.

12 I think Duke Energy needs to take a step back
13 and look at cutting some costs internally before
14 trying to impose a fee on its customers that they
15 cannot itemize for anything of value in a truthful
16 or ethical manner.

17 [Applause]

18 That’s all I’ve got.

19 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

20 Questions from the parties?

21 [No response]

22 Commissioners?

23 EXAMINATION

24 BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

25 Q Ms. Reeves, you’ve done your homework, and appreciate

1 you bringing those facts to our attention. You're right
2 that it is more impactful on those who are living below
3 the poverty line. I'm wondering what – have you done
4 any research in other states as to how they're
5 addressing this issue? Because there are a lot of
6 seniors and a lot of folks disabled. I'm just wondering
7 how it's being addressed in other areas.

8 A I can only assume that their Commissioners are telling
9 them no, because they're not increasing over there.

10 [Laughter; applause]

11 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

12 MR. STARK: Would Ms. Cynthia Knight please
13 come forward? And Phylicia Barno Byrd – I believe
14 I have that right – is on deck.

15 [Witness affirmed]

16 THEREUPON came,

17 C Y N T H I A K N I G H T ,
18 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

19 WITNESS: My name is Cynthia Knight. My
20 address is 700 Mayo Road. I live in Cowpens, South
21 Carolina, and I am also against this increase.

22 I get this little paper [indicating] every
23 month telling me how I'm doing.

24 [Laughter]

25 Even though I like to know how I'm doing, this

1 is an expensive piece of printing right here. It
2 would cut your all's costs a lot. I know you're
3 wanting the increase for different things, but I
4 look at things that I get, I see the telemarketers
5 that call me and want the power management program
6 to work. I'm against that. I don't believe in
7 taking somebody's power in the summertime and y'all
8 only paying me \$8 a month for four months. I think
9 that's cheap on your part.

10 This piece of paper right here is a four-color
11 process on two sides, on a nice sheet of paper,
12 that only tells me I'm doing good or I'm not doing
13 good. That could go in my bill and save not only a
14 four-color process envelope, a four-color piece,
15 two-sided, which is very expensive printing – I was
16 a director of printing for 29 years at Spartanburg
17 Community College –

18 VOICE: There it is.

19 [Applause]

20 WITNESS: – for the State of South Carolina.
21 This could be black and white and put in my bill,
22 if y'all want to know how I'm doing – or if I want
23 to know how I'm doing. It don't say nothing but
24 that. And it's not only an envelope; it's the
25 postage, it's the labor, it's the paper, it's the

1 printing process. It's probably a third-party
2 printing, which is even more expensive. And it
3 needs to stop.

4 [Applause]

5 I think this increase could be saved by stuff
6 like this, if you look into your departments to see
7 how your money's being spent. Also, the
8 telemarketers that call me, they have to be paid.
9 I don't think it's – I think some of it's redundant
10 because I get it on my cell phone, that I'm paying
11 for, and you're also having somebody pick up the
12 phone and call me once every two weeks, wanting me
13 to do a savings program. I have also an 89-year-
14 old dad that lives with me, and I can't afford to
15 leave him without air or power. And I wouldn't do
16 it for \$8 a month anyway.

17 I want to be just as comfortable as anybody
18 else, but I do not think this increase is
19 necessary. Thank you.

20 [Applause]

21 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

22 Parties?

23 [No response]

24 Commissioners?

25 <

EXAMINATION

BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

Q I have a question for you, if you don't mind coming back to the microphone.

A Sure.

Q Would you be willing to give that print page to the Office of Regulatory Staff –

A Sure.

Q – so they can investigate it?

A Stop mailing them all out.

[Laughter]

That's a four-color process that could be all done in black-and-white. There's nothing on there that's important enough to be in color. Both sides, plus the envelope, plus the postage, plus the labor to do it. There's your money that you need.

Q I want to thank you for calling that to our attention, and we'll look into it.

A And it could be in the bill that we get anyway. That's a separate process.

Q Thank you.

A That's costly.

[WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

MR. STARK: All right. Thank you. Thank you. Would Phylicia Barno Byrd please come forward. And

Wayne_[sic] Smith, you're on deck.

[Witness affirmed]

THEREUPON came,

P H Y L I C I A B A R N O B Y R D ,

who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

WITNESS: My name is Phylcia, P-h-y-l-i-c-i-a, Barno, B-a-r-n-o, Byrd, B-y-r-d. I live at 154 Floyd Street, Drayton, South Carolina 29333.

I'm not a fan of being in front of cameras, so the fact that I'm out here should say something. And anybody who knows me knows I don't want to be in front of these cameras.

I have two mortgages. I have my regular house, starting around about \$50,000, and I have my student loans that are \$72,000. I didn't jump out there and make any crazy purchases or do anything extravagant. I'm trying to live within my means.

Salaries have been – the minimum wage has been \$7.25 since July 2009. If you account for inflation, it – minimum wage right now is \$6.19.

My parents are elderly; they live on fixed income. My dad recently had some health issues not too long ago, and I was fortunate enough to be able to be there, but if they had not worked and had a certain amount of retirement – as a child, I want

1 to step in. I want to be able to help them. And
2 not being able to help my parents is stressful.
3 Talking to my husband at night about, "Ooh, we're
4 in love. Let's start a family," we cannot
5 reasonably think about starting a family when we
6 have two mortgages and everything else wants to go
7 up.

8 Power is not a luxury. There are people who
9 are on medications; there are people who are taking
10 care of elderly parents, families, disabled
11 children. And you want to take something that is a
12 necessity. And then, even when people do the right
13 thing and get these solar panels that are \$30,000
14 and they're also getting ready to experience
15 increases, it's not right.

16 I live in South Carolina, and I love being
17 here. We're in the Bible Belt, people, and if you
18 are going to church and talking to Jesus – or
19 whoever you talk to – Jesus will tell you that this
20 is not right.

21 [Laughter; applause]

22 There two Commandments – and I know I can talk
23 comfortably in South Carolina, because we believe
24 in religion around here – to love God with all your
25 heart and to love your neighbor as yourself. It

1 sums up all the prophets, the laws, and everything
2 I'm supposed to do. And the idea that we are even
3 entertaining this idea, and minimum wage hasn't
4 gone up – and it's not like South Carolina is
5 preparing us. South Carolina is at \$7.25, just
6 like the federal government. Now, they don't
7 deserve a raise until we get one. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

9 Parties?

10 [No response]

11 Commissioners, questions?

12 [No response]

13 Thank you.

14 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

15 MR. STARK: Okay. Wayne_[sic] Smith, would you
16 come forward, please? Phillip Stone, you're on
17 deck.

18 [Witness affirmed]

19 THEREUPON came,

20 W Y N N E S M I T H ,

21 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

22 WITNESS: My name is Wynne Smith, 2180 Highway
23 56, in Spartanburg, 29302.

24 Public Service Commission members, fellow Duke
25 Energy customers, and Duke Energy representatives:

1 Ouch.

2 Do you know what it's like not to be able to
3 pay your power bill? Have you had to decide
4 between paying for food or paying for your power?

5 I have an average income; I have an average
6 power bill. But if these massive proposed rate
7 hikes take place, I'm going to be faced with this
8 decision. Average wage earners like me will be
9 faced with power bills that they cannot pay, and
10 think of the impact that it's going to have on low-
11 income and fixed-income customers.

12 I have three Duke Power bills every month. I
13 have a home, a workshop, and a lighting bill. This
14 proposed change to the residential basic-facilities
15 flat charge to \$28 per month per bill is going to
16 be excessive. It's burdensome and it discourages
17 energy conservation. There's nothing I can do to
18 make that any lower.

19 It's a 237.8 increase in the current fee.
20 This would make it the highest residential –
21 residential facilities fee of any publicly held
22 utility in the nation. Why is one of the poorest
23 states in the country potentially being burdened
24 with one of the highest electric rates? I think I
25 know. Because Duke needs to pay for litigation

1 expenses attributed to legal actions related to
2 mismanagement of coal-ash facilities.

3 VOICE: Right.

4 WITNESS: Because Duke –

5 [Applause]

6 Because Duke needs money to pay for the
7 abandoned Gaffney facility.

8 VOICE: That's right.

9 VOICE: Yeah.

10 WITNESS: Because Duke wants to help
11 shareholders at the expense of their own customers.
12 Ouch. Not on the backs of us, our – the
13 residential customers.

14 We can't afford this. Please vote no to the
15 planned rate hikes. They're bad business; they're
16 bad energy policy; they're bad for our State; and
17 they're bad for us –

18 VOICE: Yes.

19 WITNESS: – Duke's customers.

20 VOICE: Yes.

21 WITNESS: At a minimum, \$536 additional to my
22 power bill is something I can't pay. Please help
23 us out. Ouch.

24 [Applause]

25 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Smith.

Ms. Smith – Ms. Smith, hang on one second.

Ms. Pittman wants to ask you a question.

CROSS EXAMINATION

BY MS. PITTMAN:

Q Ms. Smith, one quick question.

A Yes

Q You mentioned litigation expenses related to the coal ash?

A Yes.

Q Is that something you think the utility and its shareholders should take the burden of?

VOICE: Yes.

VOICES: Yes.

[Applause]

WITNESS: The shareholders should pay for that. We should not pay for that. If the shareholders take a hit, that's part of being a shareholder, not part of being a customer.

MS. PITTMAN: Thank you, Ms. Smith.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

Any other questions?

COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD: Mr. Chairman.

EXAMINATION

BY COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD:

Q Ms. Smith, do you mind sharing with us what your – you

1 said you had a home, workshop, and a lighting bill. Do
2 you mind sharing what your average bill is or what it's
3 been over the last year?

4 A Average per month I pay around \$200. In the summertime,
5 I pay around \$400, currently.

6 COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD: Thank you. That's
7 all I have.

8 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

9 WITNESS: Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Smith.

11 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

12 MR. STARK: Phillip Stone, please come
13 forward. And, Claire Nettles, you're on deck.

14 [Witness affirmed]

15 THEREUPON came,

16 P H I L L I P S T O N E ,
17 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

18 WITNESS: My name is Phillip Stone. I live at
19 246 South Spring Street, in Spartanburg.

20 First of all, thank you all for coming to
21 Spartanburg to listen to people here. I've served
22 on City of Spartanburg boards and commissions and
23 have listened to irritated crowds of people, as
24 well, and so I appreciate your willingness to come
25 do that.

1 I am a Duke customer, and I am a Duke
2 stockholder, as well, and I oppose this request to
3 raise the base charge over 200 percent because it
4 would be a very steep increase to individuals, as
5 we have heard tonight, who can very – who can ill-
6 afford to pay it. And I oppose it, as well,
7 because it disincentivizes conservation efforts.
8 As someone who lives alone and tries to conserve
9 energy, I often use fewer than 400 kilowatt-hours a
10 month and, as a result, I frequently have a fairly
11 low electric bill. Fortunately, as I am hearing
12 tonight. This would be the equivalent for me of
13 adding probably about five months a year of utility
14 bills in adding – in raising that base charge that
15 much. And to me it sends a signal that individual
16 conservation efforts aren't really valued by Duke
17 Energy.

18 And I would echo my – the person who spoke
19 just before me that, even as a stockholder, I would
20 say that some of those problems that have been
21 caused seem to – it seems like those should be
22 borne by the stockholders. Thank you.

23 [Applause]

24 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

25 ORS, any questions?

1 MS. PITTMAN: [Shaking head.]

2 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioners?

3 Commissioner Howard?

4 EXAMINATION

5 BY COMMISSIONER HOWARD:

6 Q Mr. Stone, will you share with us some of your
7 conservation measures you use in your home?

8 A I have used all CFL and now pretty much all LED – LED
9 light bulbs. I open the blinds in the winter. Of
10 course, I have natural gas for heat, but I try to open
11 blinds in the winter to let the sun in and keep blinds
12 closed in the summer, use ceiling fans.

13 Q Any other energy –

14 A Energy Star – energy efficient appliances. So I try to
15 do my part.

16 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

18 Any other questions, Commissioners?

19 EXAMINATION

20 BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

21 Q Mr. Stone, I'd be interested in hearing more about what
22 you said about disincentivizing customers for energy
23 efficiency. Could you take that one step further?

24 A Sure. I figure, if the base charge goes to, as I
25 understand it, about \$28 or \$29 a month, and then it

1 makes the base charge a higher percentage of my bill, it
2 means I may be saving the same dollar amount, but having
3 that base charge that is that high would seem like to me
4 it would – I'd say, "Well, it's already this much. I'm
5 not..." It makes me not feel like saving energy is
6 worth as much.

7 Q Thank you.

8 A Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

10 Any other questions?

11 [No response]

12 Thank you, sir.

13 [Applause]

14 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

15 MR. STARK: Claire Nettles, if you would come
16 forward? And this witness appears to be Mary
17 Whiteclaw or – does that sound familiar? Okay.
18 We're not sure about that. James Overton, would
19 you be on deck, please?

20 [Witness affirmed]

21 THEREUPON came,

22 C L A I R E N E T T L E S ,
23 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

24 WITNESS: I really didn't want to be here
25 tonight. I drove in from Landrum. I'm at the age

1 now where driving at night isn't my favorite thing
2 to do, but I felt compelled to be here. I, like
3 many of the people who have spoken, get the little
4 energy things. And guess what? I'm below the
5 energy-efficient axis. I am one of the most
6 energy-efficient houses in my area. And I have
7 done everything I possibly can to do that,
8 honestly. I keep my heat at 63, which –

9 VOICE: Ooh, that's cold.

10 WITNESS: I know. Because I can dress in
11 layers, and it keeps company away in the
12 wintertime.

13 [Laughter]

14 I don't leave a room without cutting the
15 lights off. I've changed out every light bulb in
16 my house. I put in energy-efficient windows. I
17 tried to get solar, but I don't get enough sun to
18 get solar. And after hearing this tonight, I'm
19 really glad I couldn't, because it would've been
20 not a good investment for me.

21 I went to one of these hearings in Columbia
22 about three years ago, with SCE&G, because, at the
23 time, I was serving on the board, and I was
24 interested in this issue. And what I really am
25 disappointed to say is I don't know if you can say

1 no to Duke, because I don't know if the Legislature
2 went ahead and did anything with the Base Payload
3 Rate Act or whatever they wrote that gave you the
4 charge of always siding with the utility. But the
5 utility is a monopoly.

6 VOICE: Yes.

7 [Applause]

8 WITNESS: Now I, like other people – even
9 though I keep my heat at 63, I like to plug in my
10 Costco warming blanket when I'm watching TV and
11 doing things like that, and if I can't impact my
12 own bill, because they're going to charge me three
13 times as much to even – before I even turn
14 something on, I'm not sure what I'm going to be
15 able to do. I guess I'll have to spend the cold
16 months with my family and friends in Columbia and
17 Charleston, and maybe in the hot months I can
18 afford to come back to my house and just not use my
19 second layer – my second story in the house.

20 VOICE: Set us back 100 years, and –

21 WITNESS: Really.

22 VOICE: – just burn a fire in the middle of
23 your house.

24 WITNESS: Well, and I do. I have propane logs
25 and a propane stove in my – a little stove in my

1 bedroom upstairs and propane logs downstairs. And,
2 you know, and I use that for supplemental heating.

3 My power goes out frequently, and not just
4 during the snowstorms. I love the Upstate. I
5 wanted to retire up here because I love the
6 country, I love the people, I love – and Columbia
7 was just too darn hot.

8 So I've done everything I know to do, and yet
9 I don't know if you even have the wherewithal where
10 you can say no to Duke Power.

11 But energy is not a luxury. It feels like it
12 after I've gardened all day and walked back – and
13 come in the house and I'm running the air at 75.
14 It feels great, you know?

15 [3-minute signal]

16 Don't do it. It's not fair; it's not right;
17 it's time for people to stand up.

18 [Applause]

19 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: I have a question for
21 you.

22 EXAMINATION

23 BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

24 Q Did you know that the Baseload Review Act was repealed
25 by the General Assembly after the nuclear fiasco down in

1 Fairfield County?

2 A I didn't know if it actually was. So I'm – I'm thrilled
3 to hear that.

4 Q It was.

5 A But I am absolutely thrilled to hear that, because I
6 know that that's – that's only fair. Not – don't
7 appoint people and say, "Make a good decision," and but
8 then tie their hands where they can't.

9 COMMISSIONER BELSER: Mr. Chairman?

10 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Yes, ma'am. Commissioner
11 Belser.

12 EXAMINATION

13 BY COMMISSIONER BELSER:

14 Q Ms. Nettles, thank you for being here tonight. You
15 stated that your power goes out frequently.

16 A Yes. And not just in the winter. I love the trees but
17 I've got – and I've got a lot of trees and, when the ice
18 comes, I know I better get out of town because the
19 power's going out. But it goes out in the summertime.
20 Last summer was particularly – in good weather, with no
21 explanation, it goes out. I have to reset my clocks at
22 least every other week, where we've had like a little
23 surge or something and then my stove, you know, the
24 clock goes off. And it's like I can't really figure
25 that out. And it's not my meter because, when I

1 renovated this house, I had a new electric system put in
2 and box and all that. Had the lines buried.

3 But I had to be here because I know the people –
4 there are people in my community that will suffer
5 because of this. I won't suffer, but I won't save as
6 much and I won't donate as much and I won't do some fun
7 things. But I know people who will suffer.

8 Q And when you say "last summer," you're talking about the
9 summer of 2018?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And you experienced outages then?

12 A Frequently, yes.

13 COMMISSIONER BELSER: Thank you, very much.

14 EXAMINATION

15 BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

16 Q Did you report those at the time, to Duke?

17 A Absolutely. I've got their –

18 Q Did you ever –

19 A I've got Duke on speed dial on my phone. Absolutely.

20 [Laughter]

21 Q Did they ever respond to your request?

22 A Well, I mean, eventually the power came back on. But –
23 but that – even their – even their reporting system is
24 not customer-friendly, because they tell you to – your
25 address is tied to the landline, and I have to keep

1 saying "No, the power's out so I don't have a landline
2 right now." So I have to put in the cell phone number.
3 And when I called and said, "Could we just change this,"
4 there was a problem. And, of course, if I'm going to
5 leave, I want to get the updates on my cell phone, you
6 know, a text that, "Hey, the lights are on. It's 11
7 o'clock at night, and you can go home." I don't know.

8 But I think you really do need to take into
9 consideration that – why should the consumer pay for bad
10 management decisions?

11 VOICE: Amen.

12 [Applause]

13 WITNESS: They did the coal ash. I didn't do
14 the coal ash. And, guess what? When I make a
15 mistake, there's no backup. My dog refuses to
16 work, so, you know, there's no backup.

17 [Laughter]

18 So I don't see how paying the CEO this much,
19 asking us to pay to clean up coal ash because
20 somebody didn't do the right job to begin with is
21 just like what they did with the nuclear stuff.
22 You know, if you're making that much money, you've
23 got to be accountable.

24 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

25 [Applause]

1 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

2 MR. STARK: James Overton, please.

3 [Witness affirmed]

4 THEREUPON came

5 J A M E S O V E R T O N ,

6 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

7 WITNESS: My name's James Overton. I live at
8 65 Wild Cherry Circle, in Lyman. And I'm mad. And
9 I think everybody in this room is mad.

10 [Applause]

11 It's greed. Greed, greed, greed. When a CEO
12 makes \$25,000 a week.

13 VOICE: Gee.

14 WITNESS: I don't make that much money a month
15 – I mean, a year. I own my own business. If I
16 make a mistake in that business, that's me. I
17 can't tell my customers they have to pay me for it.

18 Advertising. Why does Duke Energy advertise?
19 Who else are we going to get our power from?

20 [Laughter; applause]

21 You know, it's a monopoly; we don't have a
22 choice. You know, and to raise these rates is
23 nothing but greed, greed, greed. They made over a
24 billion dollars last year, and they want to stick
25 it to the little guy.

1 I'm mad. I'm mad that I have to take my time
2 to come here. By the way, thank you guys for being
3 here -

4 [Laughter]

5 - and thank you for listening to me.

6 But I'm mad, and everybody in this room is
7 mad. Everybody in Greenville County, Spartanburg
8 County, and Anderson County are mad. You've got a
9 lot of people that are mad.

10 VOICE: Yeah.

11 WITNESS: And I'm tired of it. There's people
12 on fixed incomes.

13 VOICE: Yes.

14 WITNESS: They don't have that extra money.

15 VOICE: No, they don't.

16 WITNESS: Take it out of the Duke Energy
17 salary, because I know five of them that make at
18 least \$2 million a year. Base salary plus - now,
19 the CEO makes \$21 million a year, and some of that
20 is benefits. But she brings home \$25,000 a week.

21 VOICE: A week?

22 WITNESS: A week.

23 VOICE: What's her power bill?

24 VOICE: There's your rate increase.

25 WITNESS: Any of you guys make 25 grand a

1 week?

2 VOICE: They can't answer.

3 [Laughter]

4 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Overton.

5 WITNESS: Thank you. That's my time.

6 [Applause]

7 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

8 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Okay. Ladies and
9 gentlemen, our court reporter has to repeat every
10 word that's said in here, so when we get loud, it
11 hurts her trying to make sure this is on the
12 record. And we're going to give her a break. So
13 we're going to take about a ten-minute break, and
14 then we will resume.

15 [WHEREUPON, recess was taken from 7:22
16 to 7:32 p.m.]

17 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: If we can have everybody's
18 attention, we're getting started again and we'd ask
19 everybody to please take your seats. I'm going to
20 ask Mr. Stark to call the next witness.

21 MR. STARK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would
22 Mary Whitelaw please come forward. Mary Whitelaw.

23 [No response]

24 Okay. Would Eddie Parks please come forward?
25 And, Colleen Nash, you're on deck.

[Witness affirmed]

THEREUPON came,

E D D I E P A R K S ,

who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

WITNESS: Eddie Parks, 117 Prospect Avenue.

I am a pastor, and I am also a business owner. I'm also the President of the west branch of the NAACP in Spartanburg.

We strongly oppose this increase that Duke Energy plans to charge its customers, which is the highest mandatory fee of an investor-owned utility company in the country. The planned increase would triple the mandatory fee includes – fee that's included in each customer's monthly bill from \$8.29 to \$28 per month.

If approved, the increase means more than just a higher bill for some. It could mean the difference between having power and not having power. This fee increase would place unfair burdens on low-income – low-usage customers who can least afford higher bills. This includes seniors, who often live on fixed incomes. Low-income families and also communities of color will be impacted the most. And we have residents here in Spartanburg who use medical devices, life-saving

1 medical devices, that uses power. Also, customers
2 could expect to pay at least \$336 per year without
3 even flipping a switch.

4 Low-income customers will be hit the hardest
5 by the regressive increase because they have – they
6 use less electricity, you know, and – than higher-
7 income families.

8 The mandatory fee discourages energy savings
9 because it takes away the choice of control on what
10 you pay for your own energy use. These mandatory
11 fees also get in the way of innovations that we
12 need to develop for future power and clean energy.

13 Increased mandatory fees make up more costly
14 investing savings steps to better insulate our
15 homes, buying cost-efficient appliances. In other
16 words, we have no benefits when we try to save
17 energy on our own.

18 Duke Energy's regressive new fees will make up
19 more – you've seen people who are discouraged from
20 buying the solar energy. You know, it has no
21 benefit to them. And we understand that I'm
22 repeating a lot of things that people are saying,
23 but as a pastor, I understand faith comes by
24 hearing.

25 VOICES: That's right.

1 WITNESS: And as you continue to hear and we
2 speak for those who cannot speak for themselves, we
3 advocate for those, who – that I visit on Friday,
4 those people who are barely making enough to make
5 ends meet.

6 [3-minute signal]

7 Sometimes they have to choose between feeding
8 their families or feeding themselves or buying
9 medical supplies. Okay, I see my time's out.

10 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Parks.
11 Any questions?

12 [No response]

13 Questions, Commissioners?

14 [No response]

15 Thank you very much for being here.

16 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

17 MR. STARK: Colleen Nash, please come forward.
18 Beverly Lawson, you're on deck.

19 [Witness affirmed]

20 THEREUPON came,

21 C O L L E E N N A S H ,
22 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

23 WITNESS: My name is Colleen Nash. I live at
24 641 South Church Street.

25 I agree with everybody else. Hey, I'm not

1 that old, but I'm old. I'm getting that little
2 check, too, you know. And the thing is, back in
3 2018, there came up that they sent me a new
4 address. And I asked them why did they give me a
5 new account number – excuse me – a new account
6 number and I've been at this house for five years.
7 And I talked to them, and they let me talk to about
8 10 peoples. They took my deposit off the old
9 account, put it on the new account, \$250. I said,
10 "Why did you give me a new account?" I didn't
11 move, I hadn't did anything, and nobody to this day
12 has told me or explained to me why they did it.

13 And I got it in writing, and I got a couple of
14 letters that's another man's name is on my address.
15 I said, "How you going to build a house on top of
16 my house?" I mean, you know, "I live at 641 South
17 Church Street. How you going to assign that number
18 to somebody else?" And I – you know, I prayed and
19 I cried, I prayed and cried, you know, that God
20 worked it out that I was able – my light bill that
21 – in January of that year was like almost \$900.
22 And I don't get where they're putting that \$250
23 back on there, and, you know, that's not right.

24 If you go in and key that address in, it
25 should show you that a house is already there. You

1 should take more time and do research. And they
2 said it was their mistake, but they never did give
3 me credit for \$250. They gave me credit finally
4 for \$150, and I don't think it's fair. You know,
5 if you made a mistake, just be a man or a woman and
6 say, "Well, we made a mistake, Ms. Nash. We going
7 to take care of it." But, you know, I just don't
8 understand it. I mean, you know, I don't know if
9 it's not taking time, but they told me that
10 somebody made a deposit at that address, and that's
11 the reason why, you know, they went ahead. So I'm
12 saying, "What about me, though?" I mean, you know,
13 I'm not moving. I'm – so y'all going to build a
14 new house on top of my house or what going to
15 happen? How can we both have the same address?

16 And I'd like to know, because I got my bills
17 here. I got a letter that they sent. I got
18 another – this is Mr. Moore's name; he's got the
19 same address I got. And I had – I don't understand
20 it, because, you know, I only get a certain amount.
21 And I been had, like, three surgeries last year,
22 and still, you know, I only get a certain amount,
23 and I know everybody else do. It's just not fair.
24 If you go up, I don't know what it's going to be.
25 You know, we need Duke Power, but Duke Power don't

1 need us, and I know that. But we do need the power
2 company, and I feel like, you know, we do what we
3 able to do, and that's it. But it's not fair.

4 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Ms. Nash, there's a
5 representative here from Duke in the back. Would
6 you show him your bills and let him see if he can
7 help you?

8 WITNESS: Yes, sir. Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Nash. Any
11 other questions, parties or Commissioners?

12 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr.
13 Chairman.

14 Ms. Nash, I would also ask – not to take up
15 too much of your time –

16 WITNESS: That's fine.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: – but if you could
18 get with the Office of Regulatory Staff, that nice
19 young lady sitting right there at the end, her
20 office works with ratepayers in situations like
21 yours. So, in addition to Duke Power, if you have
22 time, if you could speak with someone from Director
23 Edwards' office, I think it may help you.

24 WITNESS: Okay. Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Nash.

1 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

2 MR. STARK: Beverly Lawson, please come
3 forward. And Richard Hand, you're on deck.

4 [Witness affirmed]

5 THEREUPON came,

6 B E V E R L Y L A W S O N ,
7 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

8 WITNESS: Beverly Lawson, 451 Murph Road –
9 Murph without a y – Pauline, South Carolina 29374.

10 The reason I give that statement about Murph
11 Road is because there's two Murph Roads in
12 Spartanburg County, number one. Number two, I want
13 to talk about preventive maintenance. My husband
14 works for a company that makes parts that supplies
15 BMW. If they shut them down, it's \$11,000 a
16 minute. Now, my husband, being in preventive
17 maintenance, discovered our neighbor's tree was
18 hanging over a power line. On August the 11th,
19 after he had called three separate times, y'all
20 didn't bother to answer his call and the tree fell
21 on the line. We were without power on a Saturday
22 morning. And, yes, we keep our grandchildren, like
23 a lot of people do. We are on a fixed income. I'm
24 a retired government employee who worked at the
25 unemployment office for 40 years, and in that

1 period of time I have discovered that, if you don't
2 prevent something from happening, it's going to
3 happen.

4 They had to shut Murph Road down at Walnut
5 Grove, Pauline Road, and at Finch and Lanford Road.
6 People couldn't get in or out because of it. It
7 blocked the road.

8 Second of all, my husband looked at the bills,
9 because he doesn't pay them; I do. This little
10 paper that the other lady talked about, it says to
11 me, "This month you spent \$51 more than most
12 efficient neighbors." Isn't that amazing? My
13 husband won't let me have a warm house so he put in
14 gas logs. He keeps it at 72 because he thinks
15 that's being frugal. Also, during the summertime,
16 he's not going to let me have it at 72; it's got to
17 be at 78, because he wants to be frugal.

18 In addition to that, when he calculated the
19 kilowatt-hours, we're being charged for a building
20 that he doesn't use except to build, well,
21 bookshelves. And at that point in time, he's being
22 charged 40 cents a kilowatt-hour and our residence
23 is being charged 9 cents.

24 Now this minimum, what you're calling a basic
25 facilities charge concerns him, and me, because now

1 it's on my shoe. I am now a retired employee from
2 the government who doesn't get a lot of money in
3 retirement, and I'm now on that fixed income. And
4 he warned me – our grandson's here tonight with us.
5 And he said, "Beverly, you're going to be spending
6 my orange money. You've got to be careful." Then
7 when he got laid off from one of the companies, he
8 said, "Well, honey, just hang in there like a hair
9 in a biscuit."

10 So that's what we're trying to do. But my son
11 reminded me today as we walked out the door, he
12 said, "Mommma, these smart meters are supposed to
13 save us money." Mmm. How come you're asking for a
14 minimum of \$28? Because if you're going to charge
15 us \$56 or more, it's going to take away from the
16 fact that we are taking care of two grandchildren
17 and a daughter, and we're on a fixed income.

18 Thank you, very much.

19 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Lawson.

20 Any questions from the parties?

21 [No response]

22 Commissioners?

23 [No response]

24 Thank you, very much.

25 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

1 MR. STARK: Richard Hand, please come forward.
2 And Chris Joyner, you're on deck.

3 [Witness affirmed]

4 THEREUPON came,

5 R I C H A R D H A N D ,
6 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

7 WITNESS: I didn't really sign up to speak.
8 But I'll just – you know, I'll go ahead – since you
9 asked me to, I will, but –

10 MR. RICHARDSON: State your name and address,
11 please.

12 WITNESS: I'm sorry. Richard Hand, 116
13 Charlestown Court, Moore.

14 I'm retired. I retired from a Fortune 250
15 company, and we used a lot of power, about \$30,000
16 a month, and I know a lot of Duke Power people. A
17 lot of them are personal friends of mine. But
18 being retired, it kind of feels like a base charge
19 of that much going up is excessive, of course. And
20 it's like anything else, every year or about a
21 couple years, our – Duke's going to go up on our
22 power, as does my television bills; they go up
23 every year – going to go \$10 or above a year,
24 anyway.

25 So I was watching this advertisement on

1 Channel 7; I was watching the part where we were
2 going to have this council meeting, and right
3 behind that was Spartanburg tax officials come up
4 and saying that we're going to see increases in
5 certain taxes on our tax bills. And it seems to me
6 like it just keeps on and on and on, and people
7 just can't – we can't do that, just between taxes
8 and power and water and those sort of things. And,
9 I mean, I just wish somebody would pay attention
10 and kind of look out for us.

11 And we do have a large – we have a lot of
12 industry. And I know you have to give tax breaks
13 and stuff like that, and power breaks and all kinds
14 of stuff to get the industry to move in, but we got
15 a good bit of it, and I just think they could
16 afford it a lot easier than we could.

17 So any questions?

18 [Laughter]

19 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Hand. Any
20 questions?

21 [No response]

22 Thank you.

23 WITNESS: All right.

24 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

25 MR. STARK: Chris Joyner, please come forward.

1 And Kevin McDicey, or McDewey, perhaps, you're on
2 deck.

3 [Witness affirmed]

4 THEREUPON came,

5 C H R I S J O Y N E R ,

6 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

7 WITNESS: My name is Chris Joyner. It's J-o-
8 y-n-e-r. I live at 122 Pastorage Drive, Chesnee,
9 29323.

10 The first part I'm going to read here is that
11 every once in a while in their bills, they send
12 these little pamphlets with very fine print,
13 letting you know what their plans are, what they
14 plan to do? I have a picture of it. It says,
15 "Duke Energy Carolinas requests the present
16 increase be effective June 1st, 2019." It says, "A
17 typical customer using only 1000 kilowatts will see
18 an increase of 15.57 per month beginning on this
19 rate." It says requested June 1st and an increase
20 of \$1.54 per month beginning on June 1st, 2020, and
21 an additional – another \$1.92 per month beginning
22 June 1, 2021. It seems like everybody here is
23 focusing on this base rate, but not only this base
24 rate, but for the next two years per month we're
25 increasing, also.

1 So the annual revenue for 2018 for Duke Energy
2 was \$24.52 billion. Net, now, their net income,
3 after their expenditures, was \$2.66 billion. So
4 you're profiting almost \$3 billion a year, but you
5 need to take from our little bucket.

6 The CEO, of course, makes over \$21 million.
7 Now everybody here knows what the Fortune 500 list
8 is, right? Last year, 2018, Duke Power ranked 125
9 on the Fortune 500 list. It said, in 2018, also,
10 their fourth-quarter earnings – just their fourth
11 quarter alone – was \$464 million. Do you know how
12 much my pay increase was for the past two years?
13 Two percent. I got 2 percent. So what I make,
14 that equates to about 63 cent an hour, maybe.
15 Maybe.

16 So, if a company is allowed to simply raise
17 rates to rectify irresponsible management
18 practices, what is the incentive for them to
19 change?

20 That's all. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Joyner.

22 Any questions from the parties?

23 [No response]

24 Commissioners?

25 [No response]

1 Thank you, very much.

2 WITNESS: Thank you.

3 [Applause]

4 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

5 MR. STARK: Kevin –

6 MR. McSTAY: [Indicating.]

7 MR. STARK: Okay. Thank you.

8 David Nivens, you're on deck.

9 [Witness affirmed]

10 THEREUPON came,

11 J O Y R E M I C K ,

12 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

13 WITNESS: I'm Joy Remick. 112 Murph Hill
14 Road, Cowpens, South Carolina.

15 And the gentleman before me has said a lot of
16 things that I wanted to say, so, but I also wanted
17 to add that I did a lot of reading when I – when I
18 saw that this was coming up, and I'm just really
19 shocked that Duke Power doesn't seem to pay any
20 income taxes. I mean, I read five years ago in a
21 report that their federal tax rate was negative 3.9
22 percent. Last year in *Business Insider* Magazine,
23 it was minus 5.9 percent. So they're having lots
24 of profits every quarter. They're not paying
25 income taxes, and they're getting rebates. And one

1 report that I read was \$287 million on all these
2 profits in one year. And they need more.

3 I mean, I'm not a business person, but I'm a
4 hospice nurse and I deal with people who are sick
5 and in times of crisis in their lives. You know,
6 we have – the cost of insulin is going up. I'm
7 sure we've seen that. You know, somewhere, someone
8 has to say no.

9 That's all I wanted to say.

10 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Thank you.

11 Any questions from the parties?

12 [No response]

13 Commissioners?

14 [No response]

15 Thank you, ma'am. Appreciate you being here.

16 [Applause]

17 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

18 MR. STARK: David Neven – Nivens – Nibbits.

19 And Kelley Shipley_[sic] Gilbert, you're on deck.

20 [Witness affirmed]

21 THEREUPON came,

22 D A V I D N I V E N S ,
23 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

24 WITNESS: My name is said David Nivens, Sr. I
25 live at 2 Claymont Avenue, Boiling Springs, 29316.

1 I'd like to start off with saying Duke Power
2 Company preaches to us to be more efficient. We
3 get these little flyers in the mail that are
4 advertising the lights, or "We'll send somebody out
5 and show you how to insulate. We'll help you in
6 getting discounts." So they're trying to get us to
7 lower the load, and what that does, that lowers the
8 load at Duke Power Company. And by doing that, it
9 reduces operating expenses. And by reducing the
10 operating expenses, that puts more profit back into
11 the company for the shareholders to get. It's not
12 for the – it's not for the customers. The
13 customers are the ones that saves them money. Our
14 rewards for being conservative is increasing our
15 rates so that the stockholders will get more.

16 In the business I used to work in, what profit
17 the company received, if they needed company
18 vehicles or to do any maintenance work around the
19 shop or anything like that, it come out profits.
20 That's the purpose of making profit is to keep your
21 expenditures up.

22 And then why should we pay for their mistakes
23 like, as they've already mentioned, it was \$62
24 million to clean up coal ash. And it was \$152
25 million for the solar farms, and I really haven't

1 understood exactly what that was – entailed. And
2 then you had \$125 million they're wanting to
3 recover the cost of the Lee nuclear station plant
4 in Gaffney that was canceled two years ago. Why
5 should we – why should we pay for their mistakes?
6 It's not the customers' fault. It didn't come out
7 of our pockets to build it, so we shouldn't have to
8 make it up to them.

9 I was a Duke Power Company employee for three
10 years back in the mid-'60s. My father was a
11 division superintendent for production,
12 Transmission Department, here in Spartanburg for
13 about 25 years, and he retired in the December of
14 '65. I know how Duke Power is. I left Duke Power
15 because of a lot of problems. Duke Power Company
16 got too political.

17 I sat down last night and looked at my 2018
18 bill and it totaled \$1201. Estimated for this year
19 with the increase will be \$1402. These charts that
20 they were showing – those color charts – I had
21 seven months it was the best; I had three months it
22 was in between “effective” and “average,” and then
23 I had two months it was even. So that means that
24 my house is not that insulated, not –

25 [3-minute signal]

1 – that well.

2 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Nivens.

3 Any questions for Mr. Nivens? Parties?

4 Commissioners?

5 [No response]

6 Thank you very much, sir.

7 [Applause]

8 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

9 MR. STARK: Kelley Shipley_[sic] Gilbert, please
10 come forward. And Jerry Marihucci, you're on deck.

11 [Witness affirmed]

12 THEREUPON came,

13 K E L L E Y S H I P P E Y G I L B E R T ,
14 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

15 WITNESS: My name is Kelley Shippey Gilbert.
16 I'm going to spell it for you, because it's kind of
17 a challenge. K-e-l-l-e-y, as – oh, can you not
18 start the clock until I get my name and address
19 out?

20 VOICE: Yeah.

21 MR. RICHARDSON: Go ahead.

22 WITNESS: Okay. K-e-l-l-e-y S-h-i-p-p-e-y G-
23 i-l-b-e-r-t. I live at 147 Eastwood Circle here in
24 Spartanburg. Okay. So that was 15 seconds – 20
25 seconds of my time.

1 I wanted to say some things that other people
2 haven't said. I echo all of the sentiments, all of
3 the reasons that this is a bad, bad decision. But
4 I wanted to let y'all know I had people ask me,
5 they said, "Well, why would you even go to a public
6 hearing? What can that accomplish? Duke Energy is
7 powerful. We are powerless."

8 You know, they are a public monopoly. They
9 are rapidly acquiring other energy companies. They
10 are participating in a lot of different programs.
11 They give you free CFLs. This isn't going to cost
12 you, really. I think it may. They want to bury
13 our lines underground. It's not going to cost you
14 a penny, just give us an easement, 20 feet across
15 your property – that's only 100 feet wide – and
16 we'll give you a buck, okay? I didn't sign on for
17 that.

18 They also are building solar, and they want us
19 to buy solar credits. But guess what, "We're going
20 to raise your base rate because you're going to be
21 conserving energy and not spending as much."

22 They spend our monies without our input. We
23 are powerless. These – they're requesting a
24 permanent increase to cover past one-time costs. A
25 permanent increase because they made a mistake.

1 That is just seven different shades of wrong.
2 They're also looking for profitability of roughly
3 10.5 percent for their shareholders. I don't know
4 anyone that's making 10.5 percent on their
5 investments.

6 You know, they're charging the same base rate
7 for a mansion and a shack. If you want to look –
8 “If you want to have electricity,” which is a
9 necessity, not a luxury, “we're going to charge
10 both the same thing.”

11 This is not about fairness; this is not about
12 quality. What we want is equity. We want to have
13 some reasonableness. We want to have some say in
14 where our money goes. I don't want to be left in
15 the dark. Thank you.

16 [Applause]

17 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Thank you, very
18 much.

19 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

20 MR. STARK: Jerry Marihucci, please come
21 forward. And Jeremy Boiter, you are on deck.

22 [Witness affirmed]

23 THEREUPON came,

24 M A R Y D E K U ,
25 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

1 WITNES: I think you called my name. Mary
2 Deku?

3 MR. STARK: I – Jerry Mari- – would you state
4 your address, please?

5 WITNESS: 182 Stribling Circle, Spartanburg,
6 29301.

7 MR. STARK: Yes. Yes.

8 WITNESS: Okay.

9 MR. STARK: Please – please go forward.

10 WITNESS: Okay. I'm Mary Ann Washington Deku,
11 182 Stribling Circle, 29301.

12 Good evening, and thanks for the opportunity.
13 And everything I'm going to say is probably
14 redundant, but that means a lot of people are
15 thinking the same way.

16 So I'm speaking for the people who can't come
17 to a meeting and speak for themselves, as Mr. Parks
18 said. And just think, within three months a rate
19 increase will happen, and this is really alarming,
20 and people are not expecting it, especially if they
21 don't read the paper and are not up with the news.

22 This will be burdensome for the low-income
23 households, discourage energy conservation, and
24 would make electricity more expensive, not only for
25 households, but also for business and industry.

1 The flat fee's starting possibly June 1st, 2019, at
2 \$8.29 to \$28 per month, and increasing a bit more
3 for the next two years, as has already been said.
4 According to the US Department of Energy,
5 59 percent of South Carolina residents have
6 unaffordable electric rates already. So please
7 consider what you've heard tonight, and not vote
8 for it.

9 Thank you, very much.

10 [Applause]

11 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, ma'am.

12 Questions, anybody?

13 [No response]

14 All right.

15 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

16 MR. STARK: Jerry Marihucci? Is — are you
17 Jeremy Boiter?

18 MR. BOITER: Uh-huh.

19 MR. STARK: All right. Jeremy Boiter. Thank
20 you.

21 [Witness affirmed]

22 THEREUPON came,

23 J E R E M Y B O I T E R ,

24 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

25 WITNESS: My name is Jeremy Boiter. My

1 address is 108 Kirkwood Drive, in Moore, 29369.

2 As we know, we're here today because Duke
3 Energy is looking for, I think, \$168 million for
4 things that they call modernizations or
5 improvements. Now, coming from an industrial
6 background, words like "modernizations" and
7 "improvements" were words that we used when we
8 realized that we didn't do the maintenance that we
9 were supposed to do and had budgeted for already,
10 and needed to replace some things that had worn out
11 in kind of an emergency situation.

12 So what we've seen over the past decade is
13 pretty phenomenal, in actuality. We've seen people
14 across all income ranges, and everything else,
15 replace a lot of lighting, a lot of appliances, a
16 lot of things like that in their homes, for more
17 energy-efficient models; we've seen for the first
18 time ever, people are generating electricity at
19 their home and contributing to the grid themselves,
20 which Duke's happy to buy and sell at a profit.
21 That gives some equipment that Duke Energy doesn't
22 even have to pay for and doesn't even have to
23 maintain themselves; the people are happy to
24 maintain out of their pockets. So it's troublesome
25 to me to see that they want \$168 million for lack

1 of maintenance on things when we also see things
2 like, when the smart meter program started, there's
3 an article actually on their own website that talks
4 about how we've seen an 80 percent reduction in the
5 workforce of meter readers as a result of the smart
6 meter program. Now, I don't know how much money
7 that equates to, but last year Duke Energy,
8 according to a news report, paid out \$144 million
9 in severance packages due to layoffs. So there's
10 85 percent of that right there in people that they
11 are not paying anymore.

12 So you couple that with other things that
13 we've talked about here, a lot of different,
14 really, opportunities for Duke Energy to stand up
15 and do the right thing and take responsibility for
16 their own actions, because all of their wonderful
17 customers are certainly doing their part in trying
18 to conserve, so why don't they?

19 Thank you.

20 [Applause]

21 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Boiter.

22 Questions?

23 [No response]

24 Commissioners?

25 [No response]

1 Thank you.

2 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

3 MR. STARK: Celia Anderson, you're up. And
4 Rob Wilder, you're on deck

5 [Witness affirmed]

6 THEREUPON came,

7 C E L I A A N D E R S O N ,

8 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

9 WITNESS: Celia Anderson, 723 Highway 417,
10 Moore, South Carolina.

11 I am asking this – the Commissioners to not
12 rubberstamp these increases, these requests for
13 increases. I am asking you, for the first time, to
14 reject their ridiculous request and stand up for
15 the people. Do not make victims of the citizens of
16 South Carolina. Do not make victims for the Duke
17 Power energy consumers. They are swimming in cash,
18 and this is just outrageous.

19 Thank you.

20 [Applause]

21 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, ma'am, Ms.
22 Anderson.

23 Any questions?

24 [No response]

25 Commissioners?

1 [No response]

2 Thank you.

3 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

4 MR. STARK: Rob Wilder, please come forward.

5 And Joy Remick, you are on deck.

6 [Witness affirmed]

7 THEREUPON came,

8 R O B W I L D E R ,

9 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

10 WITNESS: Hi. My name's Rob Wilder. I live
11 at 310 East Prince Road, in Landrum, South
12 Carolina.

13 Like many of the people here, I echo a lot of
14 the same sentiments that they have – they've
15 already said. I'd like to say we've been in
16 Landrum since 2012. In 2012, we bought a house
17 that was built in 1917. Since then, we've spent
18 thousands of our own dollars in trying to make it
19 more energy efficient with double-paned windows,
20 adding insulation, switching to LED lights,
21 updating our appliances, a programmable thermostat,
22 and we put in a dual-fuel heating and air system.
23 We also, just last week, put in solar panels in our
24 yard, with the expectation that we would be paying,
25 on some months, no more than \$8.29 for that

1 facility fee, and that is a 238 percent increase if
2 it went to \$28.

3 Over the course of the life of that solar
4 system, that \$228 per year, also, increase would
5 amount to over \$5,000 extra that we would be paying
6 for that, just to hook onto Duke.

7 Also, we just got in the wire for the one-to-
8 one net metering, and I know that Duke has said
9 that they support their solar, clean energy, and
10 their – although their proposal does triple those
11 fees, and I'm not sure how that is supporting the
12 people who have invested in solar. Our system cost
13 \$23,000. Because of federal and state tax
14 incentives, we will get, you know, a good portion
15 of that back. But we did do that for our benefit,
16 but at the same time we did that for the benefit of
17 all, just like I think many people who are doing
18 solar. It's not just for themselves, but we feel
19 like we're doing the right thing.

20 Also, in 2017, there were a record number of
21 energy companies around the country who were asking
22 to do the same thing, raise their facility rate
23 fees. And it seems to me that we might be seeing a
24 new energy model from these energy companies
25 because they're not seeing the revenues, because we

1 are doing such a good job at conserving; we are
2 investing in insulation and energy-efficient homes.
3 And so I wonder if, like I said, this is a new
4 business model, a way to raise revenues. I can't
5 say for sure, but the last thing I'd like to say
6 is, if you deny this request, you will be in good –

7 [3-minute signal]

8 – company, because many of the energy
9 companies who have asked for this, they have been
10 denied by the same people that are sitting here
11 tonight.

12 Thank you.

13 [Applause]

14 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank, Mr. Wilder.

15 Questions from the parties?

16 [No response]

17 Commissioners?

18 [No response]

19 Thank you very much, Mr. Wilder.

20 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

21 MR. STARK: Joy Remick, would you please come
22 forward? And Alex Farnsworth, you're on deck.

23 [Brief pause]

24 Okay. Alex Farnsworth. All right, thank you.
25 And Demetri Tsiolakis, you're – you're on deck.

[Witness affirmed]

THEREUPON came,

A L E X F A R N S W O R T H ,

who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

WITNESS: Hi. My name is Alex Farnsworth. I live at 278 Doolittle Street, in Cherokee County.

All right. I'll tell y'all a little bit about myself. I'm a young entrepreneur. I'm a business owner. I own a seasonal business. We're open for 15 nights out of the year, I believe. So for ten months the power to my business has stayed off. There's no – there's no power going there at all. I put the breaker off, no power. Duke Power still charges me nine dollars and – I think it's nine dollars and 60-something cents, even though I don't use any power at all. That's – that's their – I guess that's what they call their base charge. I don't know a lot of their terminology. I also have a few rental properties that I do.

My thing is, you know, they want to increase our rates, but you call them out to do work to your house and then they got – they send out six workers and five of them's got their hand in their pockets, looking up, while one of them's working. You know? So – so who's – who's paying for those other six

workers to be there? We are.

And I'm – I'm not good at speeches, but I believe you guys should vote no. I believe that everybody in here – you would be going against everybody's wishes in the entire State of South Carolina if you don't vote no.

That's really all I got to say.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Farnsworth. Questions from the parties?

[No response]

Commissioners?

[No response]

Thank you, sir.

[Applause]

[WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

MR. STARK: All right. Demetri, would you come forward, please. And Marilyn Dean, you're on deck.

[Witness affirmed]

THEREUPON came,

DEMETRI TSIOLKAS ,
who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

COURT REPORTER: Excuse me, sir. Could you spell your last name for me?

WITNESS: Absolutely. My name is Demetri

1 Tsiolkas, D-e-m-e-t-r-i, last name T-s-i-o-l-k-a-s.
2 I live at 1955 Drayton Road, Drayton, South
3 Carolina 29333.

4 I'd like to – first thing, I'm in support of a
5 lot of the comments that have made before me, and
6 I'd like to thank the Commission for being here and
7 having this public hearing. But I'm concerned
8 about the proposed rate increase of 12 percent and
9 the base facility increase of 238 percent for the
10 residents of South Carolina, and I formally oppose
11 the proposed increase.

12 On February 2nd, 2014, a pipe at the Duke
13 Energy plant coal-ash ponds in Eden, North
14 Carolina, burst. According to the US Department of
15 the Interior, 39,000 tons of coal ash and
16 27 million gallons of ash-pond water were deposited
17 into the Dan River, extending down the river for 70
18 miles. This river is a source of drinking water
19 for communities in North Carolina and Virginia, as
20 well as natural habitats for fish, birds, and other
21 organisms on endangered-species lists.

22 Coal ash is the byproduct of burning coal to
23 produce electricity. It contains silica or fine
24 sand, metals, and compounds that have potential to
25 be contaminants of potential concern or COPCs.

1 Based on environmental samples collected from the
2 Dan River, the coal-ash spill included arsenic,
3 copper, selenium, iron, zinc, and lead.

4 Prior to the incident, in 2013, environmental
5 groups attempted to sue Duke Energy three times
6 under the Clean Water Act to force the company to
7 fix leaks in its coal-ash dumps. It was through
8 one of these leaks that the 39,000 tons of coal ash
9 eventually poured into the river. There was ample
10 time and attention drawn to the situation, and Duke
11 Energy did nothing to prevent it.

12 Duke Energy pled guilty to criminal negligence
13 after the Eden, North Carolina, spill into the Dan
14 River. The company acknowledged their faults in
15 security of coal-ash ponds and the failure to
16 listen to the environmental regulations and
17 precautions that were previously established. And,
18 yet, despite the admission of guilt, more spills
19 have occurred. Since the spill in 2014, there have
20 been two more spills that have happened in North
21 Carolina, at the Wilmington power plant and in
22 areas near Goldsboro, North Carolina, due to the
23 effects of Hurricane Matthew and Hurricane
24 Florence, respectively.

25 It seems that, despite the admission of guilt,

1 they continue to act reprehensibly. What lesson
2 have they learned? To me, it appears they have not
3 learned anything other than they can continue to
4 pollute our waterways and pay a fine, a fine that
5 will eventually be passed on to the residents. At
6 what point will Duke Energy have to pay for its own
7 mistakes and not pour the debt onto the residents
8 of the Carolinas?

9 This increase will disproportionately affect
10 lower-income residents. Have those individuals not
11 suffered enough during the difficult economic times
12 of the past few years?

13 One argument for the proposed increase offered
14 by Duke's state president was to accurately reflect
15 the cost to serve every residential customer,
16 ensuring all customers pay their fair share to
17 access and use the electric grid. In reality, this
18 is yet another attempt to have the folks who are
19 already suffering subsidize the energy use of the
20 wealthier neighbors. I implore the council to
21 consider our friends and neighbors in the Upstate
22 who are already living paycheck-to-paycheck and not
23 have the executives of the company.

24 Please vote in opposition to the proposed
25 energy increases at least until we can see

1 verifiable evidence that Duke will take – Duke
2 Energy will take the environment and our fellow
3 citizens into account when making decisions that
4 ultimately affect all of us. Thank you.

5 VOICE: Nice job.

6 [Applause]

7 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

8 Commissioners, questions?

9 [No response]

10 Thank you, sir. Appreciate it.

11 VOICE: Nice job.

12 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

13 MR. STARK: Marilyn Dean, would you please
14 come forward? And Marsha Diale or Daisle –

15 MS. DAIGLE: It's Daigle.

16 MR. STARK: Daigle? You're on deck.

17 [Witness affirmed]

18 THEREUPON came,

19 M A R S H A D A I G L E ,

20 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

21 WITNESS: Hi. My name is Marsha Daigle. I
22 live at 142 Len Court, here in Spartanburg, South
23 Carolina.

24 This is actually the first forum that I've
25 ever attended. I've been gone for like two, three

1 months, and I came back home and I just heard about
2 all this. I really don't like listening to the
3 news, because you don't know what's right and
4 what's wrong. But I was kind of concerned about
5 this, because I know each and every one of you
6 sitting there at the panel is to work for the
7 public and to work for us. That is why you have
8 this job. I spent 40 years, worker for the
9 government; I know it works. I've been there, I've
10 seen it, and I really think everyone sitting on
11 this panel needs to say no to this.

12 I have a son that is disabled here, and I'm
13 not speaking just for myself, but everyone that's
14 come here, these low-income families that are on a
15 fixed income cannot afford a 12 percent raise.

16 My son lives on \$20 a week, and when my mother
17 was here – the only reason I moved to South
18 Carolina is because I bought a house here in 2004
19 because I really thought South Carolina was there
20 to support their people, and to be there to look
21 out for their people, and it was a nice place to
22 live and they had jobs coming through.

23 Well, if you're going to not help the people
24 and they're going to be moving out, these
25 businesses are going to follow. They can't afford

1 this. I don't know why these businesses – are they
2 getting this same raise like everybody else,
3 because we're paying for Duke's problems? I mean,
4 they're the ones that made the error. Nobody in
5 this room – and I'm not speaking just for me,
6 myself; I'm speaking for everybody – they should
7 not have to pay for their mistakes. It's just
8 ridiculous, and I want to know if anybody here – I
9 mean, my son can't even pay his electric bill. He
10 – sometimes I'm worried I'm going to find him
11 frozen in the winter, because he can't – his bill –
12 he can't turn his heat on because his bill is so
13 expensive where he rents from. I don't know what –
14 you know, it's the only place we could get for him,
15 because of his income. Are those buildings even
16 insulated? Probably not.

17 I mean, you guys really need to think about
18 everybody, not just your jobs, but everybody that
19 here is at this meeting. They are expecting you
20 all to say no, and with your heart and with your
21 soul, you really need to think about that.

22 This increase is ridiculous. Cost of living
23 is only 2 percent, and that's the first cost of
24 living –

25 [3-minute signal]

1 – in two years, and they want to increase it
2 to 12. That is just insane. I don't even know how
3 they justify it.

4 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, ma'am.

5 Any questions?

6 [No response]

7 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

8 MR. STARK: Okay. Marilyn Dean. Is Marilyn
9 Dean here?

10 [Brief pause]

11 Okay. Would Charles Watkins please come down,
12 and James Thompson is on deck.

13 [Witness affirmed]

14 THEREUPON came,

15 C H A R L E S W A T K I N S ,
16 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

17 WITNESS: My name is Charles Watkins. I'm at
18 371 Rock Hill Church Road, Inman, South Carolina.

19 I'll basically be echoing the sentiments
20 others have expressed.

21 In its rate application, Duke explained that
22 it needs to raise – it needed to raise additional
23 revenue to cover the \$62 million it spent cleaning
24 up coal ash, \$639 million it spent converting old
25 coal plants to natural gas, \$152 million on new

1 solar farms, \$126 million to relicense
2 hydroelectric dams, and \$125 million to recover the
3 cost of the canceled Lee nuclear station at
4 Gaffney. That amounts to more than \$1.1 billion of
5 costs, which is a lot of money; however, the
6 current rates still allow Duke Power to cover these
7 expenses and earn multibillion-dollar net profits.

8 I believe clean power is important for our
9 future, and the people that have invested the most
10 in clean energy are those who have installed solar
11 power. Middle-class citizens have invested into
12 clean energy using their personal income and income
13 taxes, which were forcefully collected and then
14 redistributed in the form of tax incentives to
15 encourage investment into clean solar power.

16 The results of these voluntary and
17 nonvoluntary investments currently result in power
18 bills that not only amount to – that basically
19 amount to the connection rate, only, which is why
20 the tripling of the connection rate is particularly
21 punishing.

22 It is not acceptable that Duke Power, a
23 company with multibillion-dollar profits, wants to
24 indirectly receive tax revenue by way of a power
25 monopoly, nor is it acceptable that Duke Energy

1 benefit from private citizens' investment. It's
2 not too much to ask that a corporation with
3 multibillion-dollar profits find more innovative
4 ways to increase their profit margin while
5 delivering clean energy. It's repulsive that the
6 connection and rate pricing increases do nothing to
7 promote responsible energy usage, while at same
8 time punishing those who invested the most into
9 clean energy or energy conservation.

10 Lastly, Duke Energy laid off 40 percent of
11 their engineering staff at the Oconee nuclear power
12 plant. I believe they have taken enough money out
13 of the South Carolina economy while making billion
14 dollars in net profits. Vote no on the increase.

15 [Applause]

16 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

17 Any questions?

18 [No response]

19 Thank you.

20 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

21 MR. STARK: All right. James Thompson? And
22 Keith Dellinger, you are on deck.

23 [Witness affirmed]

24 <

25 <

1 THEREUPON came,

2 J A M E S T H O M P S O N ,
3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: My name is James Thompson, 106
5 Stribling Avenue, Spartanburg, South Carolina.

6 Now, I don't have no other work there in the
7 '80s. I used to do a lot of work for Duke. I put
8 the heating system in [word(s) indiscernible] First Baptist
9 here, and what I found out, that my house of 900
10 square feet, two-ton heat pump 14 SEER, I use a
11 5 kW heat strip that called for 40 amps, condenser
12 called for 25 amps. My light bill's a hundred and
13 something – like \$110. But I'm an old man, and if
14 I keep my temperature something like 73, I don't
15 have no arthritis. But what I'm looking at, at
16 Duke, even when they had all this bad weather here,
17 they cut limbs up there. They left them laying out
18 there. I walked through the place. They got limbs
19 up there six inches in diameter, still laying up
20 there where they cut it, when it snowed back in the
21 winter.

22 And then I looked back again. I'm old
23 history. I got a letter last week. I get \$135
24 Social Security money. The government said I can't
25 draw my Social Security because I worked for the

1 government; I can't draw off my wife because I
2 worked for the government. Then I look back; I get
3 a 2 percent raise, and y'all raising it up –
4 requesting, what, 15 percent?

5 VOICE: Twelve.

6 WITNESS: That's what I gets. So – and I'm 89
7 years old, okay? So that's what I look at. Why do
8 I get a 2 percent and y'all are requesting above?
9 That's what I look at Duke, and I have did a lot of
10 work for Duke through other companies, way back.
11 Mr. Frank Blakely and all of them way back. see.
12 I'm no teenager.

13 So a company large as Duke, why they want this
14 type of money? I had to know what I was doing. If
15 I did something wrong, I had to give an account of
16 it. Who made the mistake? Why is all this raise
17 coming?

18 So that's – that's all.

19 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Thompson,

20 WITNESS: Yes, sir.

21 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Any questions for Mr.
22 Thompson?

23 WITNESS: No. No questions.

24 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

25 WITNESS: Thank you.

1 [Applause]

2 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused.]

3 MR. STARK: All right. All right. Keith – I
4 need Keith Delinger to please come forward, with
5 Steve Harvell on – on deck.

6 [Brief pause]

7 All right. Is he coming?

8 [No response]

9 Okay. Do I have Pearline Murphy?

10 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: That's him
11 [indicating]. I think that's him.

12 MR. STARK: Mr. Harvell?

13 MR. HARVELL: Keep going.

14 MR. STARK: Okay. Pearline Murphy?

15 [No response]

16 No? Leroy Bennett? All right. Thank you,
17 sir. Abdul Ali is on deck.

18 [Witness affirmed]

19 THEREUPON came,

20 L E R O Y F . B E N N E T T ,

21 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

22 WITNESS: Yes, I'm Leroy F. Bennett. I live
23 at 764 North Church Street, Spartanburg, South
24 Carolina.

25 New resident here to Spartanburg, and it's a

1 lovely place, I must say. I'm blessed because,
2 yesterday, just before it was announced that you
3 were having the rate increase, I just had a
4 recertification on my apartment, so that – because
5 I live at an all-inclusive apartment. But the rate
6 increase will affect those who also live there
7 after they – if there is a rate increase, so –
8 excuse me if I sound a little nervous. I'm not
9 used to speaking in public, okay?

10 VOICE: You're doing great.

11 WITNESS: Thank you.

12 What I'm disappointed in – I'm disappointed in
13 the fact that Duke wants to go ahead and make a
14 rate increase about 3½ times the amount – you know,
15 from \$8 to \$28 rate there. For some, that means
16 the difference between feeding the family, or
17 feeding themselves, or having the lights turned on.
18 It's not fair. It's unjust. Because you have a
19 lot of people who are living on fixed incomes, you
20 have elderly people, you have people who are
21 disabled. Myself – God bless her soul, my – my
22 daughter, who is now deceased, she was a special-
23 needs child. And if she was living today and I was
24 making the money that I'm making now, in order to
25 try to keep a roof over her head and keep the

lights on and feed her, with the income increase that's – or, with the increase in the proposal, I wouldn't be able to do it, you know. And there are other people like myself who are in that particular situation.

I ask that the board here listen to the concerns of the citizens – the ones who are able to just barely keep the lights on, to barely keep food on the table – and say no to the proposal. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Bennett.

Any questions for Mr. Bennett?

[No response]

Thank you, sir.

[Applause]

[WHEREUPON, the witness was excused.]

MR. STARK: Abdul Ali, please come forward.

And Dwight Lewis is on deck.

[Witness affirmed]

THEREUPON came,

A B D U L A L I ,

who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

WITNESS: My name is Abdul Ali, and I stay at 245 Rigby Avenue, Spartanburg, South Carolina.

And I ain't going to – I ain't talking nothing

1 negative. I hear all this negative talk, and I
2 don't talk nothing negative. But they telling the
3 truth. Y'all sticking it to them, I mean hard.
4 You know, we – I mean, the water bill hitting us
5 up. And I'm – I'm disabled myself, disabled and –
6 and old. But y'all sticking it to us.

7 I mean, we can't keep on giving and giving and
8 giving and giving, and that's what we've been
9 doing. We give, even if we go to a store you got
10 somebody there for you to pay to buy all these
11 groceries; somebody there'll say, "Will you give
12 this?" Everybody wants somebody to give something.
13 But – but when – but y'all keep on sticking it to
14 the people, and the people – you know, give us a
15 break sometime, you know? You can't keep on doing
16 us that way all the time. And that – you know,
17 that's basically what I wanted to say.

18 And I worked for – I used to work for a power
19 company – the one, SCE&G, up there in Columbia back
20 in the '70s and the '80s when we was building that
21 plant. And so I know how you – I know how people
22 operate. They – they don't have no oath they're
23 going to stand with. And these power companies do
24 that. Because I worked at – I worked at that
25 company; I kept the people safe. I was making them

1 do everything right, and I step on the outside – we
2 done built the plant. I step on the outside, and I
3 write up a superintendent for not doing – doing –
4 being safe around his own people. Then they're
5 going to – they were going to fire me then on the
6 spot, but then the vice president of the company
7 heard about it, said, "Wait. Oh, he did it good,
8 though. He the only person ever wrote up a SCE&G
9 superintendent." But the thing is, you know, you
10 got rules. You got this oath that you make, but
11 you won't do it for the people. You won't do
12 something for the people. The people's the one
13 that are suffering, and, you know, you got to do
14 better.

15 I'm going to take all my time. Look here.

16 [Laughter]

17 No, I mean, seriously, give us a break, man.
18 We – you know, we got these – we got to pay these
19 bills, and not because – here's one black man right
20 here you can't say that ain't never worked. I done
21 worked 40 years. These feet done put some – put –
22 put something up on these things right here. My
23 last job when I came to this – back home to
24 Spartanburg was at Lee Fibers, and they like to
25 worked me to death. Eighteen years left, and they

1 like to killed me.

2 But the thing is: We got to stop it. The
3 police department, they don't make no money. We
4 can't – you can't base all our income on – on
5 SCE&G. The police probably don't make no money
6 like SCE&G. They got to work five jobs to get to
7 pay their bills. You know, and everybody basing –
8 basing it on, "Well, they got money there. Hey,
9 they're driving BMWs." Yeah. We ain't driving no
10 BMWs. You know, I got my car from a little place
11 right around the corner right there, and hope and
12 pray it make it till –

13 [3-minute signal]

14 – I pay the bill off. All right.

15 [Applause]

16 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Ali.

17 Any questions?

18 [No response]

19 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused.]

20 MR. STARK: All right. Dwight – Dwight Lewis,
21 please come forward. And Tim Brown. Tim Brown is
22 up on deck.

23 [Brief pause]

24 All right. No Mr. Lewis? Or Mr. Brown? Okay.

25 [Witness affirmed]

1 THEREUPON came,

2 T I M B R O W N ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: My name is Tim Brown. I live at 117
5 Neely Avenue, here in Spartanburg.

6 The September/October 2017 issue of *Sierra*
7 Magazine published by the Sierra Club spoke
8 specifically to the new business model for American
9 utility companies and also spoke to the commonest
10 reason for their requested rate increases. And I
11 quote, "The problem is the utility has a financial
12 incentive to build. The way utilities make money
13 is not by actually selling electricity but by
14 building infrastructure. That means the more the
15 company builds, the more it earns and the more
16 customers pay to cover those construction costs."
17 I present this as a backdrop for this past Friday,
18 March 8th, a coalition of environmental groups –
19 the Southern Environmental Law Center, the Southern
20 Alliance for Clean Energy, the Sierra Club, and the
21 Natural Resources Defense Council – filed expert
22 analyses with the North Carolina utility regulators
23 that Duke Energy's long-range plan could cost
24 customers too much money by doing the following
25 things: one, keeping aging, inefficient coal

1 plants online; two, building new power plants that
2 are not needed, that are not needed to meet
3 electricity demand; and then, three, failing to tap
4 the full potential of abundant, low-cost clean-
5 energy resources like solar.

6 And I have a question to ask. And the
7 question may seem naïve. But does the South
8 Carolina law prohibit a utility from recovering
9 from customers the expenses that it incurred based
10 on negligent or unlawful actions, negligent or
11 unlawful actions that the company's shareholders
12 profited from? And I ask that question, and I
13 quote again from a resource everyone can track
14 down. In the May 14th, 2015, issue of the *New York*
15 *Times*, it said, "Duke Energy, the nation's largest
16 utility corporation, pleaded guilty on Thursday to
17 criminal violations of the federal Clean Water Act
18 for the discharge of coal ash, a potentially toxic
19 waste product. The company agreed to pay \$1.2
20 million in fines and environmental fees, one of the
21 largest fees assessed to a company since the
22 passing of the Act in 1972."

23 That's all I have.

24 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Brown.

25 Any questions for Mr. Brown?

1 [No response]

2 Thank you, very much.

3 [Applause]

4 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused.]

5 Okay. We're going to take a break for our
6 court reporter. So we'll be back in a few minutes
7 and continue.

8 [WHEREUPON, a recess was taken from 8:35
9 to 8:45 p.m.]

10 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Ladies and gentlemen, we
11 want to call this hearing to order. Mr. Stark, if
12 you'll call the next witness.

13 MR. STARK: Yes. All right. Thank you, Mr.
14 Chairman. Could we have Cary Corbin, please, come
15 forward? And Claire Gintner, you're on deck.

16 [Brief pause]

17 Neither of those, okay. Steve Evatt. Thank
18 you. Are you Steve Evatt?

19 MR. EVATT: Yes.

20 MR. STARK: All right. Would you come
21 forward, sir?

22 [Witness affirmed]

23 THEREUPON came,

24 S T E V E E V A T T ,
25 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

1 WITNESS: My name is Steve Evatt, E-v-a-t-t.
2 I live at 280 Oak Street, Boiling Springs, South
3 Carolina.

4 I'm not articulate. I am very proud of the
5 people that have spoken here tonight, and the
6 demeanor, and what they've brought to this body. I
7 guess it's important for me not to repeat
8 everything that they have said, but I agree totally
9 with everything they've said. And the people that
10 really are hurting are not here, because they're
11 beat down. I work with them at facilities where we
12 try to pay power bills and stuff like that.

13 But, anyway, to get the point. Little thing
14 that makes me a little different from everybody
15 else is, 16 years old, I got a call one Saturday
16 morning. Played football that Friday night.
17 Saturday morning, 6 o'clock, not really what you
18 want to do is go to work, but I had to work back
19 then. And a gentleman called me and said, "Will
20 you come labor for us today? We're laying – we're
21 building some pump stations for waterworks up
22 here." And I said, "Yes, sir. I'll be over there
23 in just a few minutes." Well, 12 hours later, the
24 superintendent of the waterworks hired me, and
25 that's when I got into the utility business, at 16

1 years old.

2 Fast-forward a little bit, other than that I
3 was reading meters then; I was threatened by an ex-
4 con, pulled a knife on me because I had to cut his
5 water off, jerked the keys out of my truck. I've
6 seen it all. I've seen it all. And there's not
7 anybody that has ever worked for me that had to do
8 anything that I didn't show them first that I would
9 do.

10 Having said all that, I obviously have a
11 background in utilities. And I want to first say
12 that, on radio-read meters, I was consulting with
13 one of the utility firms here – one of the water
14 systems here, in Spartanburg County, and we had
15 studied privately owned utilities because they
16 seemed to be very efficient. Now, I want to say
17 right now these people that are here with Duke,
18 it's not fair for them to have to – I would be
19 proud if I was them, to have that job, but it's not
20 fair for them to get to it. And I'm not even going
21 to begin.

22 We put radio-read meters in, the first one to
23 put the utilities in, in South Carolina or in the
24 Southeast. It was my job to manage it and make
25 sure that it was cost-effective. Once I figured

1 that it –

2 [3-minute signal]

3 – would be cost-effective, that's when I
4 pushed a million dollars over here to go with radio
5 read. Our whole goal, all along – and I've been in
6 this 50 years – was efficiency.

7 The other part of it is: If you do a rate
8 study, there is such a thing as a base rate with
9 zero consumption. I was fortunate enough to have
10 the experience that the people here have talked
11 about, and I lived in a home where I had to work at
12 school for my lunch. So I can relate. And the
13 minimum rate – the last rate that I worked on for
14 the water system has been copied by other water
15 systems. The first thing I did when I sat down
16 with the rate was to determine how much water could
17 I give a customer – now we called it the “minimum
18 bill.” And I could make it up somewhere else, up
19 through the users, if I had to. But we set a rate
20 12-15 years ago for a minimum bill of \$12 a month
21 for 3000 gallons. Now, most any family can get by
22 on that if they have to. And the reason that it
23 was done is because we saw retired people on Social
24 Security; they couldn't even shift – if you wanted
25 to bill them at a different time, they couldn't

stand that because they needed to be there when the check came, because they came in to pay.

Now there was a time when I thought I might want to share my experience and be on the board here, and I talked to Representative Rita Allison about it. But, you know, I think about Duke Energy and the dog-and-pony shows. Now, I also – I turned down a job later in life with an engineering firm, and they came back to me and –

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Mr. Evatt, we're going to need to wrap up, because your time is...

WITNESS: – said, "Well, will you work – would you give us about 20 hours a week at \$100 an hour?" I said "Yes, sir." So I must've had some value to them.

But this is absolutely the most ridiculous thing that I have ever seen. I spent today – I didn't know that this was coming, and I'm so sorry that Dr. Holly Urick is not here, from Clemson, because I've worked a lot with her, and I was anxious to see her. But this is not even disguised, and it's easy to disguise it. Believe me, I know. I've done it – done it all. And people talk about the profits being in the millions. Duke Energy is in the billions, and it's

only after they paid out these expenses this year
that then the fourth quarter that they showed a
loss. And I could go on and on. I could talk to
you eight hours.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: I know, but you've used your three minutes.

WITNESS: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: And we appreciate it very much. And I need to ask if anyone has questions for you.

Yes , ma ' am .

EXAMINATION

BY COMMISSIONER BELSER:

Q Mr. Evatt, would you -- the utility you worked with, was it an investor-owned, private, or was it a government-owned --

A All of them were governments that I worked with, with special-purpose districts, and we had commissioners that worked with the ratepayers. And they – we were – well, it's just so fortunate that I was in a culture where our job was to do all we could and have the best organizations there was, without increasing rates.

Q I appreciate you being here tonight, and, contrary to your opening statement, you were very articulate. Thank you, sir.

1 A Well, thank y'all.

2 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, very much.

3 WITNESS: And I know it's late. I know you're
4 tired, but I've got to compliment everybody
5 tonight. I didn't want to come over here. But I
6 am glad I did, because Spartanburg has really shown
7 class tonight.

8 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

9 WITNESS: And I just want to say this: Duke
10 Energy don't want to mess with us. I can come on
11 down to Columbia if I need to.

12 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

13 WITNESS: And like a bulldog that don't turn
14 it loose. I don't really want to get to that.

15 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: I understand that, and I
16 appreciate that.

17 WITNESS: Thank, y'all.

18 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, sir.

19 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

20 MR. STARK: All right. Can we get Joyce Ann
21 Copeland? Joyce Ann Copeland? And on deck is
22 Angela Rickter.

23 MS. RICKTER: Did you say my name?

24 MR. STARK: On deck, next.

25 [Witness affirmed]

1 THEREUPON came,

2 J O Y C E A N N C O P E L A N D ,
3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: My name is Joyce Ann Copeland. My
5 address is 2925 Macvean Lane, Charlotte, North
6 Carolina 28208.

7 I'm here concerning my family's homeplace,
8 which is 555 Carver Mill Road, Spartanburg, South
9 Carolina 29301, which I am the caregiver of this
10 property.

11 This is the property that's owned by my
12 parents. Duke Energy is a neighbor to this
13 particular property, and we've been there 45 years.
14 For the first 30 years – well, let me back up and
15 say Duke owns a substation which is directly behind
16 my family's property, and for years they had a
17 service road, which is right adjacent to our
18 property, that they maintained that substation.
19 But about 12 years ago they stopped using that
20 service road and they cut through another service
21 road in the subdivision where we live.

22 As a result, it resulted in them failing to
23 maintain the property, which created kudzu,
24 vegetation, snakes. My parents are elderly. My
25 dad's 95 years old.

1 Duke – when the tornado came through in 2017,
2 a tree from Duke's property fell upon my family's
3 property. I contacted Duke. They came out, and it
4 was their decision that the tree fell because of an
5 act of God and so they were not responsible. They
6 did come out and cut the tree up, but they threw
7 the pieces across the fence, really back onto our
8 property. I have been in contact with them
9 numerous times. I've written – I mean, I've got
10 pictures [indicating] where the vegetation on
11 Duke's property, because of their failure to
12 maintain it, has encroached upon my family's land
13 about 40 feet. My dad is 95 years old; he's
14 elderly. He's not in a position to go out and keep
15 maintaining property. I sent Duke a certified
16 letter, three pages, and addressed the issue with
17 them. They in turn sent it to their insurer,
18 Sedgwick, and Sedgwick's response was that it was
19 an act of God.

20 And albeit the felled tree –

21 [3-minute signal]

22 – was an act of God, but the failure to
23 maintain the property and the vegetation certainly
24 was not. And my concern is, you know, elderly
25 citizens, such as my dad, you know, who can ill

1 afford to pay an increase, you know, I'm asking the
2 question as to, first of all, why utilities such as
3 Duke are not being required to maintain their
4 property and to be a good neighbor. There is a
5 water drain in front of our house and it runs down
6 a hill, and the – when leaves are on the trees,
7 they run down the hill into that water drain. We
8 maintain it. We get out there, even though the
9 leaves don't come from our property; we maintain it
10 to be a good neighbor. But Duke has taken the
11 position that, you know, they don't consider this
12 to be anything for them to be concerned with.

13 But the last comment that I would like to make
14 is: I'm asking whether or not there is some kind
15 of mechanism that your Commission can put forth as
16 far as the elderly customers that, you know, they
17 can have some kind of reduction or some type of
18 mechanism where these increases are limited, such
19 as with the taxes, homestead, that the citizens 65
20 and over don't pay the same as, you know, other
21 customers. And so I'm not understanding why people
22 on limited incomes are required to, you know, pay
23 these additional increases just like those of us
24 who are employed. Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Copeland.

1 And I would encourage you to talk – you’ve got to
2 Duke employees in the lobby and the Office of
3 Regulatory Staff can answer some of those
4 questions, as well.

5 WITNESS: Okay.

6 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Questions from the parties?

7 MS. PITTMAN: I was just going to remind Ms.
8 Copeland to speak with one of our representatives.
9 I’ll give you this, if you want to call that number
10 [indicating].

11 WITNESS: Okay [indicating]. Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioners, any
13 questions?

14 [No response]

15 Thank you, Ms. Copeland.

16 WITNESS: All right. Thank you.

17 [Applause]

18 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

19 MR. STARK: Okay. We have Angela Rickter, if
20 you would come forward, please. Angela Rickter?
21 Or Reckter?

22 [No response]

23 Len Fletcher?

24 [No response]

25 No Len Fletcher. What about Syly Sair? Sair?

1 VOICE: No.

2 MR. STARK: No. What about Lorene Ohman?

3 MS. OHMAN: Here.

4 MR. STARK: All right. Please come up.

5 [Witness affirmed]

6 THEREUPON came,

7 L O R E N E O H M A N ,

8 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

9 WITNESS: Lorene Ohman, O-h-m-a-n. It's a
10 Swedish name, no L in it. I live at 369 East
11 Pheasant Hill Drive, in Duncan, South Carolina, ZIP
12 Code 29334.

13 I'm 79, and I moved here in 2009, and I really
14 love the area. I looked at six states south of the
15 Ohio River as to where to retire to, after my
16 husband passed away 17 years ago. And this is the
17 eleventh home I've owned, so I'm familiar with
18 things – houses and things. And I have lived very
19 frugally because of my losses in 2008, along with a
20 lot of Americans, in the meltdown that we had.

21 My reason for being here tonight – curiously,
22 I read in the paper, *Greenville* or *USA Today*, that
23 the people that are conservative on their bill – by
24 “conservative,” I had – I called Duke Energy and
25 they ran a report that I'm going to give the

1 committee tonight, of the kilowatts that I used in
2 the last 12 months, and they range from 215 units a
3 month to the highest is 436 units a month. My
4 average utility bill with Duke Energy has been
5 anything from \$32 to \$35 a month, to \$48 a month.
6 So I conserve. I bought a house that was nine
7 years old. It didn't need a lot of fixing up. It
8 had good insulation in. And I don't run the
9 dishwasher. I live alone. That takes more energy,
10 so I wash my dishes. I don't have Internet or
11 cable in my house. I go to the library to get my
12 e-mails [indicating], so – I take out my own
13 garbage. I power-wash my house. I mow my grass
14 myself. The only thing I don't do is undercoat the
15 second deck that the people from Switzerland put
16 in, because I can't go down the mountainside.

17 But I will make a suggestion. You know,
18 you're sure to be in a bind because your
19 infrastructure needs have exceeded your – your
20 expenses are exceeding what your infrastructure
21 needs now and the future as this area grows, but I
22 don't think that someone like me should be given a
23 boost on my base rate of \$8 or \$9 a month, \$20
24 more, hike.

25 [3-minute signal]

1 I think my suggestion is to have a raised
2 increase for everyone, but I think it should be a
3 percentage of the kilowatts a person uses. And I
4 don't know if that's been suggested in the past, of
5 these other talks, because we've had some very good
6 suggestions tonight.

7 But, also, I realize now that we have a
8 developed economy here and we can sort of call the
9 punches and we're not competing as much with
10 Alabama and Georgia for these companies that, when
11 a new company comes in here, you put a special tax
12 called an "infrastructure tax" on taking in a new
13 business, especially if it's a foreign business
14 from overseas, because you have developed what
15 Nikki Haley [word(s) inaudible] is developing the economy
16 here, when BMW started in 1991. You're there now.
17 Our roads won't contain too many more companies at
18 the growth we've seen since I even moved here in
19 2009. I've seen it triple. I'm just talking the
20 road traffic. So what about an infrastructure – I
21 wouldn't call it a tax; I would call it an
22 infrastructure fee for new entries into this state.

23 Also, again, my proposal for a graduated
24 residential fee for everyone, whether they're based
25 on their usage of kilowatts and their bill per

1 month, if they look at it – because I will give you
2 the last year of the kilowatts that I use, and I
3 called Savannah at customer service at Duke Energy,
4 and she e-mailed me this [indicating].

5 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Ohman.

6 WITNESS: Who should I give this to?

7 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Give that to Mr. Richardson
8 right there, and we'll put that in as the second
9 hearing exhibit.

10 WITNESS: [Indicating.]

11 MR. RICHARDSON: [Indicating.]

12 [WHEREUPON, Exhibit No. 2 was marked and
13 received in evidence.]

14 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Are there any questions for
15 Ms. Ohman? Thank you, ma'am.

16 MR. WILLIAMS: I've got –

17 WITNESS: Thank you.

18 MR. WILLIAMS: – one question.

19 EXAMINATION

20 BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:

21 Q How large is your house?

22 A My house is 2100 feet. It was built by Pucci in 2009,
23 and it has three bedrooms – two good-sized bedrooms and
24 a very small bedroom. By "small," 10-by-11 is
25 considered, I think, a small bedroom. But it has two

1 full bathrooms with two full – one has a shower and a
2 tub in it, and the other bathroom has a shower and a
3 garden-sunken tub. I paid \$128,000 for this house.

4 Q What –

5 A It's built on a slab.

6 Q What –

7 A A two-car garage is attached.

8 Q What do you keep your thermostat on in the wintertime?

9 A I have an interesting style of living, okay? I don't
10 want to freeze at night and I don't go for electric
11 blankets. I'm afraid I'll get electrocuted some night.
12 I'm just afraid of those things. So I put up my heat at
13 night, and I turn my heat down to below 65 during the
14 day. I go to the gym – I'm 79 years old; I go to the
15 gym two hours a day. I go – I don't have Internet. I
16 don't have any cable at my house, so I do all my
17 Internet things from the library e-mail, so I can spend
18 two hours there because I want to track my stocks. And
19 then I go over to a music studio and rehearse, because I
20 sing on the Norwegian Cruise Line. I'm going to be
21 leaving in a week to do Puerto Rico. I'm a professional
22 singer. But I haven't always been that, I mean; my
23 first degree in music – out of college was in music, and
24 then I went into engineering. And that's how I met my
25 husband. And he was the author of AT&T's 911 and 411.

1 So that's why we lived in 11 foreign countries in the 25
2 short years of our marriage, and I was his third wife.

3 Q All right. Thank you very much, ma'am.

4 A Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Ohman.

6 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

7 MR. STARK: Okay. Could I have Angela McWhit
8 or McWhite, please?

9 [No response]

10 No Angela McWhit. What about Laurence Fulson?

11 [No response]

12 Laurence Fulson? No? What about Amanda Bell
13 or Amanuel Bell?

14 [No response]

15 No. Jarrod Smith?

16 [No response]

17 No Jarrod Smith. Carol McCain?

18 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: We want to remind everyone,
19 please, when that buzzer goes off with the three
20 minutes, respect everybody else's time, as well,
21 try to wrap your three minutes up.

22 [Witness affirmed]

23 THEREUPON came,

24 C A R O L M c C A I N ,

25 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

1 WITNESS: My name is Carol McCain. I live at
2 P.O. Box 913, Lyman, South Carolina 29365.

3 And, first of all, I want to thank you for
4 actually having us here tonight. I just want to
5 make a suggestion. Next time, try having it at a
6 bigger venue, maybe at an auditorium, whoever
7 planned this, or at a school auditorium so all of
8 us can get in here, because it was quite packed at
9 the beginning. So we all can come in and actually
10 see and hear everything.

11 First of all, I want to say that I think it is
12 appalling that Duke Energy is even asking for a
13 proposed rate increase. I was really shocked to
14 hear how much the CEO is actually making. I was
15 like, "Wow. That sounds like a celebrity, you
16 know, a movie star salary." And I just think that
17 it's pure greed. You know, they may say they need
18 it for equipment upgrades or technology, but I just
19 think it's pure greed.

20 You have to think about us as a people. You
21 represent us. And you have to think about us – you
22 know, personally I think it's going to be very
23 detrimental to the elderly, those who are on a
24 fixed income, and also for the poor and even for
25 the middle class. You know those who are upper-

1 class, they'll pay it, but – you know, they
2 probably don't want to pay it, but they'll pay it
3 because they have the money. You know, personally,
4 I am a second-year full-time grad student. I
5 travel back and forth between here and USC
6 Columbia, and so gas is, you know, a lot for me. I
7 have a mortgage, you know, food, and everything.
8 I've never had cable in my life. I didn't even do
9 cable. I only have the Internet because of my
10 coursework. Like, when I leave here, I've got
11 homework to do, you know, things like that. My
12 phone, I'm very frugal. I don't even have a smart
13 phone [indicating]. I'm way-back. And I don't
14 even pay that; my dad pays it. But, I mean, you
15 know, I'm just very frugal, and I think you need to
16 think about the vote that you will be casting.
17 It's costing Duke Energy nothing, but it's costing
18 us everything.

19 And my father lives in the Aiken/Edgefield
20 area and they had SCE&G, and they were bought out
21 by Dominion Energy, and they're getting a pay
22 reduction. A pay reduction. Their fees are going
23 down. So my thing is, if Duke Energy cannot
24 support us with what – with all of the needs here,
25 then they may need to be bought out by Duke Energy

1 – I mean by Dominion Energy. If you can't – if you
2 can't supply and – supply us with what we need and
3 you want to increase the rate, then maybe you
4 should go for sale and let Dominion Energy buy you
5 and let the prices go down, because I just think
6 that you're not thinking about us –

7 [3-minute signal]

8 – and what we do on a day-to-day basis. And
9 thank you, so much.

10 [Applause]

11 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. McCain.

12 Any questions for Ms. McCain?

13 [No response]

14 Thank you, very much.

15 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

16 MR. STARK: Can I have Oran Coggins, please?

17 [No response]

18 Or Tuoi Holmes?

19 [No response]

20 Chris Pecky, or Peckney, perhaps?

21 MR. PELKEY: Pelkey.

22 MR. STARK: Pelkey. Thanks. Sorry.

23 [Witness affirmed]

24 <

25 <

1 THEREUPON came,

2 C H R I S P E L K E Y ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

5 My name is Chris Pelkey. I reside at 216 Yorkshire
6 Drive, in Spartanburg, 29301.

7 I know it's been a long evening. We're in the
8 9 o'clock hour now. Thank you for staying.

9 There's been a lot of rocks thrown here this
10 evening, and I hope the rocks that were thrown are
11 not being thrown in a glass house. I'm going to do
12 a couple of quick stories of me, personally, and
13 the reasons why I do not like this request. I hope
14 you, as the Commissioners, and Mr. Chairman, will
15 go to these people and explain the people's reasons
16 for not justifying the increase.

17 I have a little daughter that's autistic;
18 she's six years old. And I have seven-year-old in
19 first grade, too. And my daughter uses a special
20 tablet to learn – or to teach her how to talk.
21 Granted, it's not life-threatening. If the power
22 goes out, she doesn't have any way to communicate
23 with her mom and dad.

24 And, also, I have some neighbors that are
25 elderly, and I was almost – wanted to help them

1 out, but they declined, because they came to me and
2 we had a talk, and they're elderly. His wife had
3 knee surgery, and he says, "Chris," he says, "I
4 can't pay my power bill this month." And I said,
5 "Do you need help? You want me to help you?" And
6 he said no, but what he did is he called Duke, and
7 he said, "Duke, I'm having trouble paying my bill
8 this month." And Duke says, "It's not my problem."
9 And they have no recourse with Duke. And what Duke
10 told him, as well: "Your power's going to get cut
11 off if you don't pay."

12 Well, what's the recourse of that? I know
13 there's options out there that the energy company
14 provides people with low incomes – extend your
15 bill, pay on a monthly basis throughout the year,
16 et cetera, but you can't afford to turn your power
17 off, and that's their first response: "We're going
18 to cut you off. You need to pay us," for the
19 services that we need.

20 With that being said, the outages – or my
21 neighborhood, outages are frequent. During the
22 tornado of 2017, September 28th, we had no power
23 for almost a week, and my lights are underground.
24 And regarding the power outages these last two
25 hurricane storms we had go through here, I bought a

1 generator. And you know what? I didn't have to
2 use it.

3 But anyways, I – I just want to reiterate, Mr.
4 Chairman, when you guys do present these people's
5 testimonies, however you do it, when you review the
6 testimony, please vote no and please explain to
7 Duke the importance of the utilities that these
8 people need. This is your first meeting of, what,
9 five? So I'm sure there's going to be a lot more
10 rocks thrown, and vote no, please.

11 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Pelkey.

12 Any questions for Mr. Pelkey?

13 [No response]

14 Thank you, very much.

15 [Applause]

16 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

17 MR. STARK: We have Erskine Lowry, or Lowry?

18 [No response]

19 No. Sandra Boykin?

20 [No response]

21 Willie McBeth?

22 [No response]

23 Walter Wasileff?

24 [No response]

25 Linda Frances?

[Witness affirmed]

THEREUPON came,

L I N D A F R A N C E S F O Z O ,

who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

WITNESS: Linda Frances Fozo, F-o-z-o, 890
Rock Hill Church Road, Inman, South Carolina,
29349.

Earlier today, I was walking around the house like I was Erin Brockovich, and then I kind of fizzled out a little bit. Everything that I wanted to say has been said already. I'm stunned that Duke is doing this, or trying to do this. And I was even more stunned by what I was able to glean from the Internet, *New York Times*, Wikipedia, about their track record, the lack of transparency, the Nobel Prize that they were awarded for something to do with imaginary numbers in economics, which sounds like that was a good thing, but given the light of what we're dealing with now I don't know what means at all. Problems with Norway.

I'm giving you random thoughts because these are thoughts that I've had, you know, like we have a president who says that there's no climate – excuse me – climate change, but yet there's an area devoted to climate change. So if there's no

1 climate change, where's the money that was
2 allocated for that particular area, and how much
3 was that?

4 I'm worried about – I live frugally. I live
5 in a mobile home, actually – it's not a house; I
6 call it a house sometimes – by choice. In '98, I
7 think I was paying \$50 a month in the summer and
8 \$80 in the winter. And now, over the past several
9 months, it's increased drastically. I think that
10 it was \$238 in the winter, December to January, or
11 something like that. Two-oh-six [\$206) now. I'll
12 take part of the blame for that, but not the whole
13 thing, for that increase. I have a meter that I
14 didn't know that I had – a different type of meter,
15 so I wasn't paying very much attention. I bought a
16 new heat pump, because mine was old, but the rates
17 were – God, they didn't even say anything.

18 But anyway, I'm worried about fires for people
19 like me who live in mobile homes but don't have the
20 means to pay these bills. You know, that's part of
21 our infrastructure, too, and if we have people that
22 are using –

23 [3-minute signal]

24 – kerosene heaters, propane heaters, to stay
25 warm in the winter months, then you're going to see

1 something.

2 And for the media: Stay on Duke. You might
3 get a Pulitzer out of it.

4 Thank you, very much.

5 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, ma'am.

6 Any questions?

7 [No response]

8 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

9 MR. STARK: All right. Could we have Dallas
10 Conyers come forward please?

11 [No response]

12 Janice Wilkins?

13 [No response]

14 Greg Hinson? All right. Thank you, sir

15 [Witness affirmed]

16 THEREUPON came,

17 G R E G H I N S O N ,

18 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

19 WITNESS: My name is Greg Hinson. I live in
20 the Roebuck community of South Carolina. I'm
21 really representing our family business. The
22 address of that business is 8499 Valley Falls Road,
23 in Boiling Springs.

24 We manage approximately 800 rental properties,
25 and I interact with Duke Energy nearly on a daily

1 basis. If my experiences with Duke Energy were
2 similar to a restaurant or a mechanic shop or any
3 of the other places that you all go to, to do
4 business, if you had a choice of whether you would
5 or not do business with that company, I would not
6 do business with Duke Energy. But I'm trapped.
7 Like many of the people that have been here
8 tonight, we're trapped. I've had to contact the
9 regulatory staff on numerous occasions where we
10 were wronged by Duke Energy.

11 The folks that answer the phone are merely
12 able – and I want to tell you folks back here in
13 the back that work for Duke Energy, that are
14 supposed to be making notes. They can only fill in
15 blanks on a computer. They don't know what a meter
16 is; they don't know what a ground wire is. They
17 understand nothing – nothing – about the power
18 structure or any of the simple things that people
19 are trying to talk to them about.

20 And then, when they don't understand and your
21 problem doesn't fit into their little box, and you
22 ask to speak to a supervisor, you hold and hold.
23 Just this week, I held for 46 minutes to get power
24 turned on at a vacant rental property. My wife had
25 called two hours earlier and got power turned on at

1 two properties. Because we had a final bill of \$46
2 that was not past due, but they wanted the money so
3 that they would turn on this account. I have had
4 thousands of accounts with Duke Energy and an
5 impeccable, impeccable payment history, to be
6 treated like a dog.

7 This is a corrupt group of people – a very
8 corrupt group of people. And if you all vote to
9 allow this rate increase – I know that this is
10 going to come off really harsh – you’ve gotten in
11 bed with them. You have gotten in bed with them.
12 This is not right. I could pay the increase, but a
13 lot of the folks cannot. And it’s just – it just
14 seems like that there’s no choice. I can foresee
15 that this will happen. I’ve been around long
16 enough; I can see that this will happen. But I
17 want you – I want it to weigh on your conscience if
18 you allow it to happen, because just like the lady
19 said –

20 [3-minute signal]

21 – about people freezing to death, that’s a
22 real reality, too.

23 And I do want to thank you all for – for
24 coming here tonight. I know it’s very late.

25 [Applause]

1 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
2 Hinson.

3 Any questions for Mr. Hinson?

4 COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD: Mr. Chairman, I got
5 one quick one for Mr. Hinson.

6 EXAMINATION

7 BY COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD:

8 Q Mr. Hinson, you've heard Commissioners can't talk to the
9 utility directly, and – and we're a separate agency from
10 the Office of Regulatory Staff, but you mentioned that
11 you had contacted South Carolina Office of Regulatory
12 Staff. Have they been able to resolve some of your
13 problems that you just described with Duke Energy?

14 A Commissioner Whitfield, they were excellent to deal
15 with. They were the – honestly, if it were not for
16 them, I would not have been able to get the issues
17 resolved and, honestly, I could not have been able to
18 conduct our business, because we were denied the ability
19 to turn power on because of a stolen power meter that we
20 reported to Energy Protection. It got moved about – I
21 don't know, somewhere close by, and the transmission was
22 still sending a signal. They put a new power meter in
23 that the technician didn't plug in all the way, and we
24 were hit for about \$900 worth of stolen power.

25 Again, the regulatory staff was wonderful. Within

1 probably 48 hours of my contact with them, the problem
2 was resolved. But we shouldn't have to – we shouldn't
3 have to resort to those things to get these problems
4 resolved.

5 Q Well, sir, you've got Director Edwards here tonight and
6 other leaders from ORS, so certainly –

7 A I've got pretty good contacts over there.

8 COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD: Sounds like you do,
9 and I'm glad to hear that you have reached out to
10 our sister State agency.

11 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman, one
12 quick question.

13 EXAMINATION

14 BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:

15 Q So has the service improved since you reached out to
16 ORS?

17 A With Duke Energy?

18 Q Yes.

19 A No, it's gotten worse. You know, we get hit – we get
20 hit with – North Carolina has a higher connection fee
21 than South Carolina. And oftentimes I get hit with this
22 higher connection fee because my office is in Boiling
23 Springs, South Carolina, and when I call and I give them
24 our address – our billing address – Boiling Springs,
25 North Carolina, pops up into their system first. When I

1 call for energy, I can fill in the blank on that
2 computer screen by just telling them what goes in the
3 blank, without them asking. I do this many, many times
4 a week. And so I'm constantly having to get them to
5 read this information back to me, so that it's correct,
6 so I get my bill correct. But they – they try to
7 invoice us for connection fees that are really for North
8 Carolina and not for South Carolina. But the worst is
9 when they deny me power because I owe a bill that I'm
10 not past due on, but they just have this protocol of
11 demanding money. And I'm telling you, it's illegal.

12 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: I would –

13 WITNESS: It is illegal.

14 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: I would ask you, if you
15 would, going forward – you may already be doing
16 this, but if you're not, keep good records. Keep a
17 log book, every time you call them, and put the
18 date and time, and if you have one of those –

19 WITNESS: I – I do. I do have one.

20 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: If you have one of those
21 47-minute calls –

22 WITNESS: I do that.

23 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: – document it, and the
24 more documentation you have the better they'll be
25 able to help you at ORS and, in turn, we'll hear

1 about it later.

2 WITNESS: And I know that my time is up, and I
3 – I know that these folks have got other matters,
4 but one of the other issues that I've got is that,
5 for property managers, there's a portal system.
6 And the portal system requires – Duke Energy
7 requires – you to be on a revert-to-owner program.
8 Well, any property manager in South Carolina will
9 tell you that, if you have a tenant in the property
10 and for some reason power gets put into the
11 landlord's name, the landlord cannot cut that power
12 off. If so, I would lose in court every single
13 time, and the judge would treat me miserably. And
14 so the revert-to-owner requirement, in order to set
15 up a portal is – is – is wrong for South Carolina.
16 It doesn't comply with the South Carolina
17 Landlord/Tenant Act. And I've tried many years to
18 talk to the folks with Duke Energy, only to get
19 smoke blown up my rear about, "Oh, yeah. Well,
20 we'll talk about that and get back with you," and
21 things like that, but – but that never happens.

22 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Would you provide those –

23 WITNESS: It just seems wrong that we're
24 forced into – I don't participate in it.

25 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Okay.

1 WITNESS: Landlords are being forced into
2 something that puts them in legal trouble.

3 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Yeah. I didn't know if
4 that was a requirement of all landlords or not.

5 WITNESS: It's not a requirement. In order to
6 use the portal, where I can go in with the computer
7 and apply for power, disconnect power –

8 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: I see. I see.

9 WITNESS: – without having to talk to these
10 nimwits that can only put things into a box, then I
11 have to use the revert-to-owner; it's a requirement
12 of them.

13 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Thank you.

14 WITNESS: For landlords.

15 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Well, we'll look into it.
16 I appreciate you sharing that with us.

17 WITNESS: Okay. Guys –

18 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Hinson.

19 WITNESS: – and, madam, thank you for your
20 time. Thank you, very much.

21 [Applause]

22 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused]

23 MR. STARK: All right. Malik Fareed? Do we
24 have Malik Fareed? Malik Fareed.

25 [No response]

1 No? Thomas Ringer?

2 [Witness affirmed]

3 THEREUPON came,

4 T H O M A S R I N G E R ,

5 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

6 WITNESS: Thomas Ringer, 428 Royal Oak Drive,
7 Spartanburg, South Carolina.

8 I'm going to discuss two things: financial
9 and arrogance. I'm going to read right out of this
10 thing I've got here, and I'll be glad to give it to
11 each one of you people. "Good is reported" – wait
12 a minute – yeah. "Good is reported to have told
13 the news media that, if South Carolina Public
14 Service Commission doesn't give Duke what it wants"
15 – do you hear that? – "what it wants, then she will
16 get the South Carolina General Assembly to do so.

17 I don't know what we got you guys up there
18 for. Can you explain that? Maybe you guys can.
19 This is ridiculous. With arrogance like that.
20 Have you not heard this before?

21 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Where – where are you
22 reading that from?

23 WITNESS: Out of this letter here from the
24 *Greenville News*, February 10th, 2019. I'll be glad
25 to give you a copy of it.

1 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Give it to ORS, so we'll
2 – she can make copies later.

3 WITNESS: Who's ORS?

4 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Right here [indicating]

5 WITNESS: Oh, okay. Well, wait a minute. Let
6 me get through.

7 All right. I think that that that's the most
8 ridiculous thing I've ever heard in my dang life,
9 and that's all I can say from that standpoint.

10 Oh, and as far as these people getting rate
11 increases? Well, North Carolina denies them. I'll
12 read out of this issue here I've got, which was
13 from *US News and World Report*: "North Carolina
14 regulators denied on Friday a request from Duke
15 Energy to raise electric rates, ordered the utility
16 to refund \$60 million in deferred taxes to
17 customers, and fined it \$70 million for the way it
18 handled coal ash." That's two issues right there.

19 Plus, we haven't see any – any kind of relief
20 for the taxes that the president put through.
21 Y'all seen anything on that? I don't hear anybody.

22 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: It's going to be
23 considered in this coming – upcoming hearing.
24 That'll be one of the issues –

25 WITNESS: I doubt it.

1 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Well, it is.

2 WITNESS: Have you heard – have you heard them
3 do it? Have you heard anything –

4 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Sir – sir, we can't answer
5 your questions. We –

6 WITNESS: No, I know y'all can't.

7 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: I know – well, we're not
8 allowed to by law.

9 WITNESS: I know you can't. And here's
10 another thing: "The commission also ordered the
11 \$70 million fine not to be," listen, "not to be
12 passed on to customers," you get that? "...because
13 Duke Energy 'placed its consumers at risk of
14 inadequate or unreasonably expensive service' in
15 how it handled coal ash."

16 How are we going to handle it? I'm listening.
17 Gentlemen, I don't hear anything.

18 The arrogance of this woman telling you,
19 basically, she don't need y'all because she can go
20 to the General Assembly in Columbia.

21 Don't sit there like that.

22 [3-minute signal]

23 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Ringer.

24 WITNESS: No, I don't think it's thank you
25 nothing.

1 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Any questions for Mr.
2 Ringer?

3 WITNESS: Oh, by the way: One person asked –
4 one poor person – about why they didn't lease the
5 equipment on the solar deal? Well, it just so
6 happens, if you lease it, you don't get the
7 investment tax credit. That's the reason they
8 don't do it.

9 [WHEREUPON, the witness was excused.]

10 MR. STARK: All right. Do we have Paul Grey?
11 Paul – Paul Gray.

12 [No response]

13 Caroline Smith?

14 [No response]

15 All right. I think that's it.

16 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Okay. That's the last of
17 our – our signed up to testify, so we will – we are
18 adjourned. Thank you for coming, everyone.

19 [WHEREUPON, at 9:35 a.m., the hearing in
20 the above-entitled matter was adjourned,
21 to reconvene at 6:00 p.m., March 13,
22 2019, in Anderson, South Carolina.]

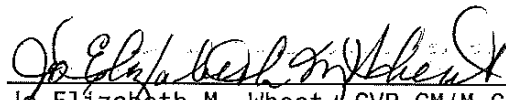
23 _____
24 [WHEREUPON, Hearing Exhibit No. 1 was
25 marked and received in evidence.]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Jo Elizabeth M. Wheat, CVR-CM-GNSC, Notary Public in and for the State of South Carolina, do hereby certify that the foregoing is, to the best of my skill and ability, a true and correct transcript of all the proceedings had and testimony adduced in an evening public hearing held in the above-captioned matter before the PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA;

That the witnesses appearing during said hearing were sworn or affirmed me to state the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth;

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, on this the 10th day of February, 2020.


Jo Elizabeth M. Wheat, CVR-CM/M-GNSC
Hearings Reporter, PSC/SC
My Commission Expires: January 27, 2021.